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Articulations in the Caribbean Diaspora:

London's Carnival Arts Scene and the Cultural Politics of Space, Place, and Value

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Ethnomusicology

by

Deonte Harris

2018

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Articulations in the Caribbean Diaspora:

London's Carnival Arts Scene and the Cultural Politics of Space, Place, and Value

by

Deonte Harris

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor Timothy D. Taylor, Chair

This dissertation is an ethnomusicological study of value and diaspora, centered on the cultural production of carnival in one of the Caribbean's largest overseas communities: London. While acknowledging the significant economic contributions of the Notting Hill Carnival street festival to the British economy, which generates an estimated £100M during its annual production, the principal aim of this dissertation is to illustrate how non-economic forms of value are produced through carnival that are (or may be at times) external to its market value. This is done by integrating anthropological theories of value with my ethnography of London's carnival arts scene to better understand how music, cultural practices, festival performances, and even social spaces have come to acquire significance and value among black Britons of Caribbean heritage

in particularly meaningful ways. Additionally, considering that Caribbean Britons are an underrepresented, dispossessed, and historically exploited social group, this dissertation argues that attention must be given to the specific ways that structural inequality and asymmetrical power relations in Britain impact the lives of racialized peoples, which also affects how value and meaning are assigned to particular things, activities, spaces, and places by members of marginalized groups. Drawing on 18 months of field research in London between 2013 and 2017, this dissertation illustrates: 1) how carnival art, music, and festival performances in London have been mobilized as a community-oriented, space- and place-making initiative for marginalized black groups in post-WWII Britain; 2) how London-based carnival arts practices help to facilitate sociocultural interconnections between disparate communities within the African/Caribbean diasporas; and 3) how distinct kinds of value (economic, social, cultural, symbolic, and political) are produced and disseminated through carnival-related activities in London.

The dissertation of Deonte Harris is approved.

Robin Davis Gibran Kelley

Timothy Rice

Helen M. Rees

Timothy D. Taylor, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

This dissertation is dedicated to the memories of the radical visionaries

whose lives, creative ingenuity, and intellectual brilliance have inspired this project:

Claudia Jones

Rhaune Laslett

John La Rose

Darcus Howe

Ashton "Mighty Tiger" Moore

Stuart Hall

Cedric Robinson

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2014b "It's a London Thing: Bringing the Caribbean to the UK." In *Ethnomusicology Review Sounding Board*. February 3, 2014. http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/content/it's-london-thing-bringing-"caribbean"-uk.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the role of carnival in articulating the cultural politics and values of the postwar Caribbean diaspora in Britain. The large-scale immigration and resettlement of Caribbean people to Britain, Europe, Canada, and the United States during the second half of the twentieth century has had a monumental impact on postwar geopolitics and global popular culture, fundamentally reshaping the modern world socially, culturally, and politically. According to a 2006 United Nations report on Caribbean migration, the region has lost more than five million of its population of 37 million in the past 50 years alone due to international migration (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs). Between 1948 and 1970, approximately 500,000 Caribbeans, mostly from former British colonies, relocated to the UK. In this context, the resettlement of Caribbean people in the UK, along with other colonial African and Asian migrants, produced a unique kind of British "social drama," to borrow the words of anthropologist Victor Turner.[1] Their resettlement challenged the established colonial and imperial political orders, in addition to the domestic hierarchical social structures that governed British national life. These conflictive social relations are still being played out in the UK today, especially around questions of immigration, multiculturalism, and British national identity in the contemporary Brexit moment.

Coinciding with the roots and routes of Caribbean migration to Britain and beyond in the postwar era has been the export of culture, including the rapid development and expansion of several Caribbean-styled carnivals and arts practices across the globe. According to anthropologist and carnival historian Garth L. Green, there are approximately 80 overseas

[1] Victor Turner describes a "social drama" as "a sequence of social interactions of a conflictive, competitive, or agonistic type" (1988:33).

[2] The graph and data for the top 10 music festivals in the UK was produced by Consultancy UK

Caribbean carnivals that occur throughout North America and Europe (2007:210). The largest of these diasporic celebrations take place in New York, Miami, Toronto, and London, cities that received some of the highest numbers of Caribbean migrants during the twentieth century, and that they now call home.

This dissertation is based on 18 months of field research in London between 2013 and 2017 and is centered on carnival arts and music practices among black Britons of Caribbean heritage. The study illustrates: 1) how carnival art, music, and festival performances in London have been mobilized as a community-oriented, space- and place-making initiative for marginalized black groups in post-WWII Britain; 2) how carnival arts practices help to facilitate sociocultural interconnections between disparate communities within the African/Caribbean diasporas; and 3) how distinct kinds of economic, social, cultural, symbolic, and political value are produced and disseminated through carnival-related activities in London.

Over the course of this dissertation, I investigate the historical, spatial, musical, and ethnographic contexts of London's carnival arts scene and the different local and global factors that contribute to its production: postwar Caribbean migration and resettlement, grassroots organizing, cross-group collaborations, national music competitions, and individual/community activism. Additionally, I draw on anthropological theories of value, as well as diaspora and spatial theory, in order to explicate how meaning is made, transmitted, and circulated through carnival art and music performances among social actors in London's carnival scene.

Rather than studying "value" from a framework that privileges productive labor, commodity/gift exchange, or analyses of objects, as is prevalent in the general theoretical discourse on value, this dissertation promotes an ethnomusicological approach to the study of value and attempts to understand how music, performance, and other cultural practices, in

specific times and contexts, acquire significance among social actors in particularly meaningful ways. This approach has largely been inspired by crucial interventions in the study of value by anthropologists such as David Graeber and Michael Lambek. Considering the diasporic context in which London's Caribbean-styled carnival takes place, my dissertation also combines the study of value with diaspora and spatial theory to account for the ways that diasporic consciousness, sensibilities, and interrelations are mapped onto musical products, spaces, and performances in London's carnival arts scene. This, too, affects how value and meaning are assigned to particular activities within the carnival domain. Finally, because black Britons of Caribbean heritage are an underrepresented, dispossessed, and historically exploited social group, my dissertation foregrounds questions of value relationally to experiences of marginality and strategies of empowerment. This is done by interrogating the politics of value in London's carnival arts scene via traditions of black radicalism, where I show how the political imagination of UK-based activists, artists, and musicians have been converted into forms of creative resistance to marginalization through productions of carnival art, music, and festival performances.

The questions I attempt to answer in this dissertation are as follows: What is the social, cultural, political, and economic significance of the Notting Hill Carnival (NHC), and the carnival arts scene more broadly, to London, the UK, and the African/Caribbean diaspora(s)? How have the artistic practices of black British carnivalists, which draw inspiration from the local British context, as well as from African, Caribbean, and African American sources, been used as a means to imagine a "new Britain" devoid of ethnocentric boundaries of belonging? And finally, how can centralizing the experiences, perspectives, and activities of black, UK-based carnivalists of Caribbean heritage illuminate new patterns of cross-border

interconnections, interrelations, and interdependencies that have been forged through ongoing processes of a postwar diaspora-in-the-making?

DISCOVERING LONDON'S CARNIVAL ARTS SCENE

Research and Methods

I set out to conduct fieldwork in London for the first time in summer 2013, the peak of carnival season in the UK, under the mentorship of Dr. Jacqueline DjeDje. This research would continue after 2013 under the mentorship of my current graduate adviser, Dr. Timothy D. Taylor (2014-17). The primary focus of my study in 2013 was the NHC street festival; however, I also attended several events related to carnival over the years that took place in August just prior to the street festival. This included the London Calypso Tent, masquerade camps, soca fêtes and concerts, Panorama (steel competition), and several others. While in the field, I documented my experiences of different carnival events and activities in London's scene through a multitude of mediums, including through field notes, photography, and audio/visual recordings. I also conducted nearly 30 interviews with various individuals that participate in carnival-related activities on a regular basis, year after year: masqueraders, bandleaders, organizers, promoters, soca/calypso artists, etc.

One of the very first interviews I conducted in the UK was of a singer-songwriter of Trinidadian heritage who goes by the stage name Alexander D Great; he is also a practicing calypsonian. After describing his personal background, he shared with me that he has relatives residing in countries all over the western world, the result of a postwar Caribbean diaspora-in-the-making.

> Within the bigger diaspora from Africa, there is a little diaspora, which is from all points in the Caribbean outwards and back. *And we're all interconnected*. There are so many people I know who have similar reaches into the same places that I have with their families. So I guess it's because . . . I guess it must have been the 1950s and '60s when

> they were looking for work, Caribbeans looked to the big metropolises in the world: New York, London, Toronto were the first . . . Miami because it's so near. And there is where they ended up forming communities. And of course, *where they formed communities, they re-enact their culture*, which is the whole point of it because they feel either cut off from it, or they need connections with their past, with their cultural practices. So, they just created right where they are (emphasis added, Alexander D Great 2013).

Insights from Alex during the early years of my field research on carnival in London set the stage for me to begin thinking more critically about notions of diaspora and the relationship of Caribbean migrant communities to the formation of Caribbean-styled carnivals throughout the world. After acknowledging the proliferation of these carnivals that were formed in the aftermath of large-scale emigration from the Caribbean to cities all across North America and Europe, he stated that, though the communities are interconnected, they are also quite different from one another. As he put it, "there are big cultural variations because of the mix of all the stuff" (Alexander 2013). This "mixing" that Alex refers to is the result of ongoing processes of localization, where Caribbean populations began to establish new roots abroad in their countries of settlement post-migration. As a result, the variation is reflective of the particular histories, social conditions, and political and cultural contexts that Caribbean migrant communities found themselves in. This led me to begin the process of interrogating what made London's NHC street festival unique, particular, and distinct from other carnivals and festivals in the world.

After attending various carnival events in London over the years and conducting interviews with a range of carnival culture producers like Alex, I began to realize that "carnival" signified more than just the NHC street festival to my informants. First, and perhaps foremost, its particular history, which is rooted in the postwar black British experience, has greatly factored into the ways they have assigned meaning and value to NHC. For them, carnival is never divorced from this history of black migration to Britain and the collective struggle against marginalization. Secondly, they also view the street festival as the culminating event in a series

of carnival-related activities that black carnivalist are engaged in throughout the year, every year. To this point, a second revelation occurred during summer 2015 regarding the production stages of costume bands and masquerade that reinforced to me that I needed to adjust my research aims and considerations beyond the street festival.

Every summer since 2013, I have received copies of newspaper articles, magazines, pamphlets, and other printed literature on or about carnival in London from one of my London-based friends of Caribbean heritage, Gail Patterson. In the 2015 summer edition of *Time Out London* that she gave me, there was an article printed about masquerade and the production process for costume bands that discussed how, by the conclusion of NHC, carnivalists were already in the process of reproducing carnival for the next year. Insights into this process came from an interview with a London-based masquerade band known as Trinity Design Collective, which was conducted by journalist Emma Finamore and printed in the summer 2015 edition of *Time Out London.* In the interview, the Trinity masquerade organizers stated that between August and October 2015 (which overlaps with the NHC street festival), the planning stage begins: "'Right now, in our minds, we're in 2016,' says Azaria. 'We're already thinking about next year's Carnival before this year's Carnival has even happened!" (Finamore, *Time Out London*, Summer 2015:42). The group then proceeds to break down their production timeline for NHC, from October 2015 to August 2016: October to December (building costumes), February (choosing the music), March to May (recruiting dancers), June (fitness), July and August (finalizing the production), August Bank Holiday (Carnival time!).

Reviewing the timeline reinforced the insights I had gained through a multitude of interviews, that carnival is not just a performance or single production that takes place on the streets of Notting Hill; it is also a cultural practice that extends throughout the calendar year.

Considering these insights, I decided to widen my investigation beyond the two-day street festival to what I have called "London's carnival arts scene," which includes all of these activities as an interrelated process of making carnival and places emphasis on the specific group of social actors that participates in, and directly contributes to, the production of London's carnival arts scene—the aficionados who are affectionately regarded as "carnivalists."

One final moment that shaped the development of this study came from an interview I conducted in 2015 with carnival historian and activist Michael La Rose. In the interview, La Rose discussed at length how intricately linked London's carnival scene was to the social and political history of Caribbean/black people in postwar UK. Additionally, he told me that it was linked to the production of carnival scenes beyond Britain, noting the carnivals in Trinidad, New York, Toronto, and Miami specifically. Regarding the last point, he stated that when viewed as a single collective, Trinidad and these overseas Caribbean carnivals actually form a distinct Caribbean carnival circuit, where carnivalists from each of these places interact with the others in various ways. I then begin to ponder how, and in what form(s), these diasporic interactions take place.

For starters, none of these carnivals overlap. The Trinidad Carnival is the only one that adheres to the Christian liturgical calendar, taking place just before Lent every year (February). Each of the aforementioned overseas Caribbean carnivals are staged during the summer/fall seasons: Caribana in Toronto (July), Notting Hill Carnival in London (August), Labor Day Carnival in Brooklyn, New York (September), and finally, Broward Carnival in Miami (October). There are two advantages to this staggering of carnivals: they do not have to compete with each other to garner attendance and participation, and the arrangement allows carnivalists (the array of artists, musicians, DJs, masqueraders, bandleaders, and promoters) to travel and

participate in the diasporic carnival festivals of the circuit. So my general take-away from this initial assessment was that carnivalists move back and forth across the diaspora specifically for Caribbean carnivals on an annual basis.

Additionally, I found out that these carnivals are not just linked because people move between them, but also because cultural goods, such as music, circulate between them as well. Upon returning home from the UK in fall 2015, I decided to do some general background research on the overseas Caribbean carnivals. When I looked up the official website of the Miami Carnival, for example, soca music began to play as soon as the page loaded, and I could not believe my ears. These were not just a random selection of soca tunes being promoted on the Miami Carnival website; these were the very same songs I had heard over and over again at various carnival-related events in London that summer, including at the NHC street festival, songs like "Ola" by Olatunji (which had won the 2015 international soca monarch competition in Trinidad), "Ducking" by Fadda Fox, "Lucy" by Destra, "Vagabond" by Ricardo Drue, and "Like Ah Boss" by Machel Montano, to name a few.

There are a few important things to note about these particular recordings, and others like them, in relation to London's carnival scene. First, none of these recordings were produced in the UK, nor do they feature UK-based artists. Instead, the recordings are imported into the UK from the Caribbean, where the featured artists on the recordings are based. Second, these recordings are produced and released in time specifically for the regional carnivals of the circum-Caribbean annually (namely Trinidad, Barbados, and Grenada). A residual effect of this is that the music also circulates abroad to the overseas Caribbean carnivals in the diaspora (US, Canada, and UK) in time for their carnival celebrations as well. So one crucial way the Caribbean carnivals of the diaspora are connected to each other is because the DJs serve as "cultural mediators" between

the different carnival sites, enabling continuity and coherency to the Caribbean carnival circuit. What begins to surface from this observation of diasporic musicking is that the vitality of London's carnival arts scene is actually heavily dependent upon cultural production in the Caribbean. As a result, it is not far-reaching to state that NHC, as the so-called "largest street festival in Europe," would not (and could not) exist in its present form without the valuable musical and cultural contributions from the Caribbean and the circulation of these materials throughout the diaspora. Moreover, such a framework also alludes to the fact that London serves as a crucial nexus of Caribbean diasporic culture, and its carnival arts scene plays a significant role in helping to facilitate the growth and expansion of a continually globalizing Caribbean carnival network.

As I wrote the following chapters, I tried to bear all of these insights in mind while drawing upon my own experiences in London's carnival arts scene as a participant-observer and foregrounding the voices, perspectives, and concerns of my informants at various points throughout the dissertation. Moreover, the insights I acquired during field research not only altered the scope of my research aims, which changed over time as discussed above, but also directly effected the content and structure of my dissertation chapters in particular ways: 1) the history of London's carnival arts scene is tied to the legacy of black migration to the UK in the postwar period; 2) the specific cultural context in which NHC takes place in London, in space and time, is what gives the street festival many of its distinctive characteristics and qualities as a local cultural production that is also infused with diasporic sensibilities; 3) attention to the social actors who participate in the NHC not only illuminates particular dynamics of the historical and cultural context of the street festival and carnival arts scene, but also sheds light on the ways that carnival is suspended in a web of signification across differing "value regimes"; 4) among black

carnivalists, the activities and events that lead to, and surround, the NHC are also vital components of London's carnival arts scene, and moreover, they point to the fact that carnival is a cultural practice and not just a single production on the streets of Notting Hill; and finally, 5) in addition to being regarded as a cultural practice, carnival has also been a long-standing political project of black carnivalists struggling against marginalization and inequalities wrought by asymmetrical power relations in postwar British society.

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Study of Festivals

The UK is widely known for its vibrant festival culture, as there are several large-scale festivals that take place in Britain each year. Examples of these include the Glastonbury Festival, a five-day contemporary music festival; Edinburgh Festival, which is a series of art and cultural events that takes place during the summer and involves theatre, comedy, music, dance, opera, and workshops; Chinese New Year, a global celebration of Chinese cultural heritage based on lunar and solar calendars; Melas, an outdoor festival that features music, dance, cuisines, and fashions of the UK's South Asian population; and several dozen Caribbean carnivals around the country celebrating Caribbean culture and traditions through food, music, dance, and masquerade. Today, there are about 25 different Caribbean-styled carnivals that take place in the UK, each with their own histories and genealogies.

The three largest UK-based Caribbean carnivals take place in Leeds, Birmingham, and London (the NHC). Of these, the NHC is the oldest and largest. In comparison to other festivals in the UK, NHC is also exponentially larger than each of them in size and scale. Take UK-based music festivals, for example (Figure 0.1). The largest music festival in the UK, the world-renown Glastonbury Festival, draws out about 120,000 attendees, while the top 10 music festivals

combined has a crowd totaling about 700,000.[2] The NHC, which draws out between 1 and 1.5 million people annually, is 10 times the size of Glastonbury, and nearly 2 times the size of the 10 largest music festivals in the UK combined.

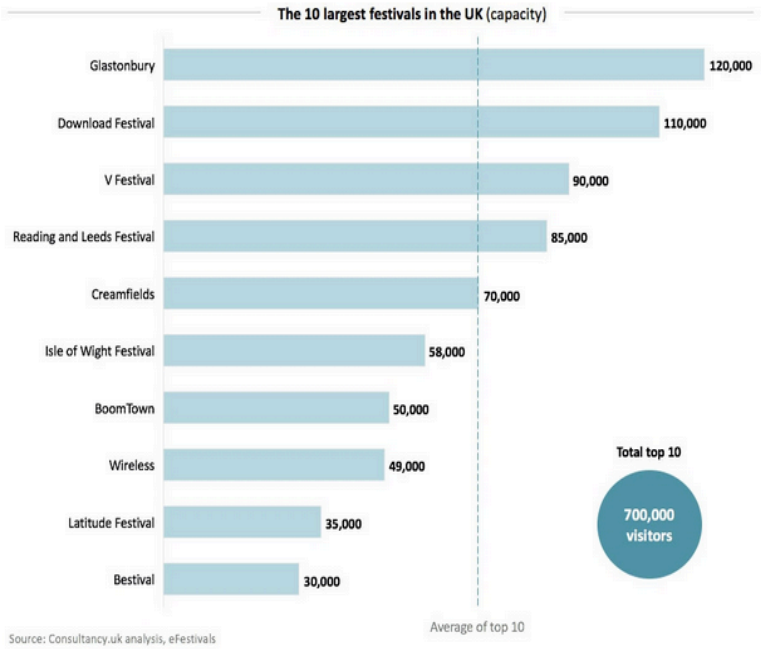


Figure 0.1 – Graph of the 10 largest music festivals in the

There is a vast literature on the study of festivals in anthropology, sociology, history, folklore, and ethnomusicology, covering a rich array of festival types (holiday celebrations, music/art festivals, carnivals, etc.) and their social/cultural impact in society (Hill [1972] 1997; MacAloon 1984; Bauman 1992). In the ethnomusicological literature on music festivals, the case studies include a range of music genres, including classical, jazz, folk, world music, and various popular music styles (Rice 1994; Bohlman 2002; Harnish 2006; Rees 2012; Taylor 2017), and in several of these studies, ethnomusicologists have also examined the relationship of music

[2] The graph and data for the top 10 music festivals in the UK was produced by Consultancy UK and posted on their official website, https://www.consultancy.uk/news/13576/top-10-largest-music-festivals-in-the-uk.

festivals to tourism (Titon 1999; Brennan 1999; Cooley 2004; Gibson and Connell 2005; Rommen and Neely 2014; MacMillen 2015).

Though festivals differ in their structure, function, purpose, and meaning, there are some commonalities between them. For example, most festivals are public events that occur annually, taking place on a specific date or periodic time each year. They are also celebratory in nature, organized around certain themes, principles, or beliefs, and involve community participation, as well as performances or exhibitions of some kind. Lastly, there are several reoccurring themes in the broader literature on festivals, illustrating patterns of common interest among the scholars. These themes include myth, ritual, and symbolism (Logan 1988; Quinn 2003); authenticity and commodification (Buck 1977; Gotham 2002); and liminality, the carnivalesque, and festivity (Turner 1967, 1977; Bakhtin 1984), among many others.

In this dissertation, I seek to contribute to the existing literature on festivals through my ethnography of the NHC street festival in two ways: 1) by interrogating the specific ways that music and sound mediate socio-spatial relations within the festival grounds, and 2) by showing how festivals are always suspended within complex social processes through which value, meaning, and signification are created, shared, and contested in various ways among its attendees, organizers, investors, and producers.

The Study of Carnival

It may be useful to distinguish between festivals and carnivals, as all carnivals are festivals (generally speaking), though not all festivals are carnivals. That is to say that carnivals certainly have things in common with festivals, yet there are particular things that distinguish carnivals from other kinds of festival celebrations. The distinguishing characteristics of carnival, and Caribbean-styled carnival more specifically, will be highlighted in the remainder of this

section.

The word "carnival" derives from the Latin term *carnaval* (or *carnevalar* in Italian), meaning "removal of meat." It is also oftentimes interpreted as "a farewell to the flesh." As a ritual practice in medieval Europe, particularly in places like France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, southern Germany and the Netherlands, carnival was observed during the pre-Lenten period between Christmas and Ash Wednesday. While the Lenten period (six weeks before Easter) came to be marked by fasting, studying, and prayer, symbolic of the forty days of fasting by Jesus Christ as recorded in the Christian bible, pre-Lenten carnival celebrations were enmeshed in medieval folk culture of merriment and entertainment, featuring the consumption of excessive amounts of food and drink, music, dance, and masquerade exhibitions, as well as engagements in one's own sexual proclivities prior to Lent.

European colonization of the Americas led to the spread of carnival across the Caribbean and Latin America, chiefly via Spanish and Portuguese conquests. Additionally, the transatlantic slave trade, as well as indentured servitude, had a dramatic impact on the shape, nature, and development of carnival in the New World, with the most prominent and recognizable of these colonial carnivals being the Rio Carnaval in Brazil, Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and the Trinidad Carnival (Port of Spain). While these were/are related to earlier practices of carnivals in medieval Europe, the New World carnivals came to be strikingly different in structure and purpose, as they intermixed European customs with the various cultural traditions of the indigenous populations of the Americas, which were also combined with a plethora of music, dance, and masquerade practices from Africa (slave laborers) and Asia (indentured servants). Finally, as a result of twentieth century emigration patterns from the Caribbean, new traditions of carnival have emerged in several North American and European cities in the post-WWII period

that are directly linked to carnivals that developed in the Caribbean during the nineteenth century. At the center of this globalization of Caribbean-styled carnivals is the Trinidad Carnival (Race Today Collective 1977; Manning 1990; Cohen 1993; Nunley and Bettlheim 1998; Allen and Wilken 2001; Scher 2003; Green and Scher 2007; Connor and Farrar 2004; Riggio 2004).

Regarding the history of the Trinidad Carnival itself, Erroll Hill's foundational text, *The Trinidad Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre* (1972), is especially important for not only providing a critical history of its local/regional development following the emancipation of enslaved Africans and the importation of an indentured Asian population, but also linking it to the internationalization of the Trinidad Carnival abroad. He also chronicles how the Trinidadian-style of masquerade and costume design eventually came to serve as the dominant model for carnival celebrations beyond the Caribbean, especially among Caribbean migrant communities abroad.

While the visual culture of the Trinidad Carnival has been important to establishing the uniqueness of the celebration, music has also played a key role in the development of carnival in Trinidad (Rohlehr 1990; Liverpool 2001). The vital role music and musicians play in productions of Caribbean carnival festivals have also been noted by several ethnomusicologists, including Jocelyne Guilbault (2005a, 2005b, 2007), Stephen Stuempfle (1995), Shannon Dudley (2004, 2008), and Timothy Rommen et al. (2014), among others. In particular, Guilbault's 2007 book, *Governing Sound: The Cultural Politics of Trinidad's Carnival Musics*, is particularly noteworthy, as it creates a "critical genealogy of calypso," which traces how the musical style emerged onto the carnival scene under distinct racialized and classed social orderings in Trinidad, and within the broader context of colonialism and the anticolonial struggle as well. From this background, calypso became entangled with Trinidadian nationalism, informing the

development of a Trinidadian national identity and becoming Trinidad's national music during the twentieth century. After exploring calypso, Guilbault investigates its musical offshoots (soca, rapso, chutney soca, and ragga soca), the new carnival musics of the neoliberal era. In her investigations of the evolution of soca, Guilbault revealed that the ultimate aims of contemporary soca artists are to target youth groups as the primary audience and develop new strategies for penetrating the global music market and garnering mainstream appeal. These changes to carnival musicking in Trinidad, from calypso to soca, have had a great impact on practices of carnival in the Caribbean diaspora, as well as carnival-related music and festival tourism abroad, including at the NHC.

However, the meaning of these carnival musics and their practice contrast significantly in diasporic contexts, as I show in my ethnography of London's carnival scene. While sentiments of Caribbean nationalism are still attached to carnival musics by members of overseas Caribbean communities, helping to sustain cultural ties between the Caribbean and its diaspora, these musics have also become intertwined with localized political projects abroad for celebrating cultural differences and creating a sense of unity across difference for the diverse Caribbean island groups that are living in diaspora.

NHC Studies

The majority of studies on the Notting Hill Carnival are general histories of the carnival and its development over the years (Cohen 1980, 1982, 1993; Alleyne-Dettmers 2005; Blagrove and Busby 2014). Others have investigated the present-day organizing and logistical planning of the NHC (Burr 2006), or used strategies of scenario-planning among carnival organizers, stakeholders, and participants to project the future of carnival (Ferdinand *et al*. 2013). Additionally, the performance-based studies in the literature on NHC focus on the visual culture

of carnival (costumes, masquerading, and sculpture art) almost exclusively (Alleyne-Dettmers 1997, 2005). While significant, this literature lacks a more holistic analysis of the festival and its various performance arenas (calypso, soca, masquerade, steel pan, and sound systems) as a single entity. Moreover, ethnography is under-utilized compared to historical research, and an account of music and musicking at carnival is largely absent.

At the NHC, music is highly regarded among carnivalists and also plays a vital role in the production of the festival. In fact, according to "Carnival Futures" (Ferdinand et al. 2013), a study conducted among carnival organizers, academics, stakeholders, and other practitioners in carnival, the participants of the study "identified the music as the *most important core value* of the Notting Hill Carnival" (19; emphasis added). Consequently, the lack of musical studies on London's carnival represents a significant lacuna in the academic literature on NHC.

One of the lone studies of musicking at NHC is "The Sounding of the Notting Hill Carnival: Music as Space, Place and Territory" (Henrique and Ferrara 2014). In this essay, Henrique and Ferrara investigate how sound, music, and listening are deployed at the carnival to organize and territorialize the various performance spaces of the festival. This insight is invaluable, especially for illustrating the importance of music and sound to both the structuring and sonic experience of the NHC. However, like the aforementioned scholars of NHC, Henriques's and Ferrara's study is also centered solely on the street festival and does not contextualize the NHC within London's broader carnival arts scene.

As a result, there is a significant gap in knowledge regarding the extended temporality and spatiality of carnival activities in the lives of its producers and participants in the UK beyond the street festival. Additionally, there is little to no account of the reasons why they continue to dedicate their time, energy, and resources to produce carnival-related events throughout the year,

every year. Thus, this dissertation is a significant departure from the literature on London's carnival. Instead of treating the NHC street festival as an isolated phenomenon, I not only contextualize the festival by situating it *within* London's broader carnival scene, in order to explicate the meaning and significance of carnival arts in the local context of London/Britain, but also trace the global-local contours, linkages, and interdependencies that bind London's carnival scene to a global network of Caribbean carnivals in the diaspora.[3]

FRAMING LONDON'S CARNIVAL ARTS SCENE

The Diaspora Context: Articulations and Black Cultural Politics

Since the late twentieth century, there has been a marked increase in the study of dispersal among ethnic populations from a center or original "homeland" to communities that are now spread across multiple territories. Many of these groups are formally regarded to as "diasporas." Two texts that serve as excellent historical and conceptual overviews of diaspora are *Global Diaspora: An Introduction* by Robin Cohen (2008) and *Diasporas* by Stéphane Dufoix (2008). According to Cohen, there are at least nine common features of diaspora, five of which includes dispersal to two or more foreign regions, collective memory about the homeland, strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over time, a troubled relationship with host societies, and a sense of empathy and solidarity among co-members in the country of settlement (Cohen 2008:17). Since 1991, a multidisciplinary journal dedicated to the study of diasporas, migration, and globalization entitled, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, has also been in print.

Studies based on the cultural practices of Africans and African-descended peoples in the

[3] To date, I have attended the NHC in London four times (2013-17) and Caribana in Toronto once (2016), observing cultural linkages between the two. In addition to the diasporic carnivals, NHC is increasingly influencing the style of carnival in several cities across Europe, most notably in Berlin, which I attended in 2017.

Americas have played a foundational role in the rise of diaspora studies in both anthropology and ethnomusicology (Yelvington 2001; Monson 2001; Butler 2010). In this discourse, the transatlantic slave trade and the formation of slave societies are typically situated as the foundation from which the African diaspora is understood and largely discussed, as can be seen in investigations of African cultural retentions and syncretism in the New World (Herskovits 1941; Apter 1991), as well as the development of theories of cultural transformation, or "creolization" (Mintz and Price 1976; Trouillot 2002; Palmié 2006).

In the field of African Diaspora Studies, the term "diaspora" is understood to be historically politicized and emblematic of the rise of black cultural politics from the late nineteenth century and into the postwar period, namely by way of Pan-Africanism. An excellent overview of this historicized and politicized sense of diaspora can be seen in an article published by Brent Hayes Edwards titled "Uses of Diaspora" (2001). Edwards's article traces the genealogy of the term "diaspora" among scholars of African-descent and notes how it does not actually appear in the literature until after the Second World War. Though there were many black scholars conducting research and writing about the African diaspora pre-WWII, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Price-Mars, Katherine Dunham, C. L. R. James, and several others, it was not until the mid-1950s that the term "diaspora" appeared in the literature in the context of the Pan-African Movement. More specifically, pan-Africanist scholars were the first to use the term diaspora in relation to black subjects in an attempt to coordinate the political interests of African-descended peoples around the world. Two of the central scholars that Edwards note are George Shepperson and Joseph E. Harris, pioneering figures in the development of African Diaspora Studies as a field of intellectual inquiry in the United States. As Edwards's research shows, their work ushered in a new consciousness regarding the socio-

cultural meaning of blackness, and its political potential in forming alliances and fostering solidarity across the diaspora, within the larger struggle for freedom, liberation, self-government, and human/civil rights on a global scale.

Scholars of black Britain have also made significant contributions to African diaspora studies. This includes historical accounts of the black experience within the British Empire, the impact of black presence and culture on British society, and the seminal role that black Britons have played in global freedom movements (Fryer 1984 [2010], Hebdige 1987; Shyllon 1992, James and Harris 1993; Adi 1998, 2013; Morgan and Harris 2004; Perry 2013; and Ford 2015). Additionally, black British scholars have introduced a number of critical theoretical interventions in the study of race, culture, *and* diaspora, many of which were spurred on by the cultural studies turn among British academics during the second half of the twentieth century (Hall et al. 1978; Hall 1988, 1996; Gilroy 1987, 1993a, 1993b; Mercer 1994; Alexander 1996, Carby 1999; and Hesse 2002).

One intervention in particular that had a monumental impact on the trajectory of African diaspora studies since the 1990s was Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993a). In his seminal book, Gilroy conceived of the Black Atlantic as "one single, complex unit of analysis" by considering the modern economic, social, political, and cultural history of Africa, Europe, and the Americas in relation to each other. This formulation was propagated as a critique to absolutist conceptions of race and ethnic cultures, as well as black nationalism in the U.S., in order to "produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective" of the African diaspora in the Western hemisphere (1993a:15). As a concept metaphor for the "Black Atlantic," Gilroy evoked the image of ships in motion to foreground a black historiography of movement; of encounters, interactions, and exchanges across the Atlantic

between the spaces of Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Building on his analysis predicated on movement (of people, ideas, and goods), Gilroy then interrogates the roots and routes of black subjectivity and agency in the African diaspora, and argues that the hybrid and compound nature of black political thought, cultural identities, musics, and art not only transcends individual nation-states and disrupts ideas of cultural and racial purity, but also is reflective of a "distinctive counterculture of modernity" (36).

Despite its wide celebration across the disciplines for its contributions to African diaspora studies, the *Black Atlantic* has also been criticized for its limitations and oversights on diaspora, especially pertaining to geography (Black Pacific, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean?), linguistics (non-Anglophone black world?), not differentiating streams of migration and reasons for migrating (Middle Passage, labor migration, colonial migration, refugees seeking asylum?), and its lack of an analysis concerning power asymmetries that exist within and across the diasporas (gender, class, ethnicity, Euro/American hegemonies?). Some scholars who have raised these concerns in African diaspora studies since the publishing of *Black Atlantic* include Jacqueline Nassey Brown (1998), Tiffany Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley (2000), Edward Alpers (2003), Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (2005), and Tiffany M. Campt (2006), among many others. By and large, they have proposed developing a more global, and interdisciplinary framework for studying diaspora beyond the Atlantic model.

Scholars of contemporary black diasporas in Europe have been a part of the vanguard of disrupting hegemonic formulations of the African diaspora that are fixated on the consequences of the transatlantic slave trade alone (Hine et al 2009). According to Nimako and Small 2009, there are at least four types of contemporary African diasporas that can be distinguished today in the context of postwar Europe: "(1) Black Europeans of African descent, (2) the Afro-Caribbean

in Europe, (3) continental African diaspora in Europe, and (4) African Union diaspora in Europe" (2009:229). Historian Allison Blakey breaks these categories down more thoroughly, citing that there are three main categories of black immigration in Europe: 1) groups that have colonial ties to particular European countries, namely Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and Germany; 2) African refugees seeking political asylum, many of whom ended up in Nordic countries; and 3) students seeking educational in Eastern Europe (Blakey 2009:6). Through these streams cited by Nimako, Small, and Blakey, postwar international migration patterns complicate the notion of a singular "African diaspora" that is fixed on the aftermath of the Middle Passage. This position on diaspora also stands as a direct critique of Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* model, which is grounded in a discourse of black diasporic subjectivity that begins with the Middle Passage and centers "slavery as the primary historical crucible for modern blackness" (Goyal 2014:vi). In other words, Gilroy's "Black Atlantic" is representative of what Michelle Wright has called a "Middle Passage Epistemology" on the African diaspora (2013, 2015), which happens to completely ignore how post-WWII emigration from Africa to Europe (and elsewhere) has also produced new African diasporas alongside the transatlantic slave trade and Caribbean migration patterns throughout the twentieth century. As an alternative model, Wright proposes the development of a postwar epistemology that complicates the dominant historical and geographical frame of modern blackness that is fixed on origin narratives stemming from the Middle Passage and accounts for the diverse "spacetimes of different black diasporic groups" to advance contemporary African diaspora studies (Wright 2013:218).

A particular advantage to this global framework on diaspora and modified temporal lens of analysis beyond the Middle Passage is that it acknowledges that there are, in fact, several African diasporas (and even diasporas within those) that have been produced under different

historical, social, political, and economic conditions and circumstances. Moreover, they point to the fact that diasporas are made and unmade through ongoing processes, diasporas are constituted under global race, gender, and class conditions, and the proliferation of linkages that exist within diasporas are not inherent but must always be articulated (Patterson and Kelley 2000). This orientation necessarily highlights the range of heterogeneity that exists within and across black diasporas, while not undermining the existence of similarities between disparate groups and the possibilities of alliances being formed across difference.

Following these more recent interventions and trends in diaspora studies, as well as Michelle Wright's call for the development of a postwar epistemology in black diaspora studies, my dissertation interrogates the social, cultural, and political impact of Caribbean migration to Britain, the formation of a contemporary Caribbean diaspora in the UK, and the contributions of Caribbean people to British popular and festival culture in the postwar era. This is done through historical, ethnographic, and musical investigations of London's carnival arts scene, which developed in the context of large-scale black/Caribbean settlement in postwar Britain, as well as within hierarchical and lateral relations of dominance, subordination, and difference that structures modern British society. Considering this context, I argue that London's carnival arts scene can be understood as a crucial "articulation" of the contemporary black/Caribbean diasporas in Britain (Hall 1996; Edwards 2003). Moreover, throughout the dissertation, I show how London-based carnival performances and arts practices not only give expression to the cultural politics of modern blackness in Britain and forge links between black diasporic communities, but also produce distinct kinds of value in the process.

Spaces, Places, and Margins

It is incredibly difficult to study the black diaspora, or any diaspora for that matter,

without also engaging in a critical discussion of space and place, especially in an ethnographic investigation. The reason for this is predicated on two interrelated phenomena: 1) every diasporic group or community exists *somewhere* (in particular locales), and 2) diasporas are also constituted by their own unique histories and socio-spatial relations. So while a diaspora may be formed in the aftermath of the large-scale relocation of a specific social group to multiple territories, whether this dispersion occurs voluntarily, involuntarily, or through forms of coercion, diasporas are sustained by ongoing processes of interactions and exchanges across time and space which create linkages from place-to-place, between "here" and "there," wherever that may be. Considering the spaces and places of diasporic formations thus necessitates the interrogation of their specific social, cultural, and political contexts, in tandem with the proliferation of linkages that are forged between diasporic communities (i.e., the articulations). Put another way, a focus on articulations offers different ways of understanding space and spatial relations among actors within a diasporic framework, and attention to questions of value in these contexts, I argue, enables the scholar to better understand how and why particular actions and connections are meaningful to them.

In the Oxford English Dictionary, there are 1824 different entries related to the definition and application of the term "space."[4] These range from the conceptualization of space in abstract terms that are scientific, mathematical, or measurable, to those that are humanistic, experiential, and socially constructed. The latter framework of analysis greatly impacted the "spatial turn" in the social sciences and humanities beginning in the second half of the twentieth century. Some of the scholars who were particularly influential for the development of this intellectual movement

[4] Search for the definition of space in the Oxford English Dictionary. http://www.oed.com/search?browseType=sortAlpha&f_0=Definition&page=1&pageSize=100&q_0=space&scope=SENSE&sort=entry&type=dictionarysearch

include Henri Lefebvre ([1974] 1991), David Harvey (1973 [2009]), Michel de Certeau ([1984] 1988), and Michel Foucault (1986), among many others. The writings of Lefebvre on social space are of particular interest in this dissertation.

The conceptualization of space and spatiality in *The Production of Space* (1991) by Henri Lefebvre is centered on the premise that space is not passive, but active, as energy and time fashion space and is inseparable from it as well. Building upon this notion of space as active, Lefebvre develops his theory of "social space" using a Marxist analysis of production to bear on the social and political processes that influence how space is created, used, and coded. According to Lefebvre, not only is social space a social product, being constituted by social relations of production and reproduction, it also incorporates a range of material social practices and activities by individuals and collectives. Additionally, Lefebvre notes that spaces have histories and are never de-politicized. He therefore argues,

> We should have to study not only the history of space, but also the history of representations, along with that of their relationships—with each other, with practice, and with ideology. History would have to take in not only the genesis of these spaces but also, and especially, their interconnections, distortions, displacements, mutual interactions, and their links with the spatial practice of the particular society or mode of production under consideration (1991:42).

Following Lefebvre, I provide a history of the development of London's postwar carnival arts scene in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, before engaging in an ethnographic exploration of the production of the NHC street festival in Chapters 2 and 3, connecting the historical account of NHC with its contemporary social, cultural, and material specificity. This is done by drawing on Lefebvre's theories on space to not only account for what happens at NHC, in space and time, but also contextualize the meanings and significance of specific actions that occur within the NHC festival space. Particular attention is given to how the festival space is created, structured, organized, used, and experienced among carnival participants and attendees, as I attempt to

better understand why it takes the form that it does and what it means to different groups of people who take part in NHC.

The "spatial turn" has had a monumental effect on a range of human geography scholars interested in the study of both space and place, many of whom have attempted to bridge the two together (Massey 1994, 1999; Amin 2002, 2004; Agnew 2011). Like space, place also has a multitude of meanings and is applied in a variety of ways. For example, place has a geographic meaning, which largely refers to locality. Place also invokes a rank, temporal ordering, and social positions (Agnew 2011). Among human geographers who study space and place, feminist geographer Doreen Massey has arguably been the most influential scholar on the topic to date.

Like Lefebvre, Massey theorizes space as being constructed and constituted by social relations. In *Space, Place, and Gender* (1994), one of the important things Massey highlights in her conceptualization of space is how social relations co-exists simultaneously through particular networks at various scales, the local and global, necessarily making space a socially dynamic phenomenon rather than a static entity. She writes that because space is created out of the simultaneity of social relations at various scales, "space is by its very nature full of power and symbolism, a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and cooperation" (1994:265).

Beyond her theories of space, Massey also advocates for the development of a more progressive and dynamic concept of *place* to account for the geography of social relations that are stretched out over space. The model she proposes, a "global sense of the local, a global sense of place," considers the impact that movement, flows, intermixture, and social interrelations across space have on how people conceptualize and experience "a sense of place." While emphasizing the existence of multiple and differing senses of place, rather than a homogeneous

or singular one, Massey notes that the multiplicity and pluralism of experiences do not negate the local specificity, particularity, or uniqueness of a place. In this vein, according to Massey, "what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a *particular constellation of social relations*, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus (emphasis added, 154). Just as spaces are full of power, so are places, especially as it pertains to flows and movement. To draw out this idea more, Massey develops a theory of place that is informed by a "power-geometry," which connotes how "different social groups and different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to . . . flows and interconnections" (1994:149).

Considering the insights from Massey on global "senses of the local/place" in Chapter 1, I incorporate her model to my interrogation of black immigration and resettlement in postwar UK among groups emigrating from Britain's former colonial territories, namely the British Caribbean. More specifically, I use her model of a "global sense of the local/place" to shed light on the ways that London, as the seat of the former British Empire, has historically been situated as a central point of intersection within a global, core-periphery network of social, political, and economic interrelations that have unevenly shaped the lives and experiences of its British colonial subjects. Connecting to this, I also show how the projected notion of Britain being the "Mother Country" became increasingly unsettled in the context of anti-black racism, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiments in the postwar period, as black migrants begin to develop new "senses of place" in modern British society in accordance with their disposition and aspirations.

In addition to considering formulations of space and place in my investigation of carnival and carnival arts, I also think it is vital to analyze the particular ways that Caribbean Britons are

marginalized in British society. On marginality, anthropologist Anna Tsing makes an important contribution to the development of a more progressive analytic model for investigating the interfaces of the local and global in her 1994 article "From the Margins." Just as Massey insists on the study of power relations in her global-local model on space and place, Tsing calls for the analysis of the margins and experiences of marginality as a way of interrogating power and creative responses to asymmetrical power relations. As an analytic framing, Tsing suggests that focusing on the "margins" not only highlights local and global issues of power, but also provides critical insights into how aspects of culture are oftentimes used to empower marginalized populations. According to Tsing, the margins as an analytic placement "makes evident both the constraining, oppressive quality of cultural exclusion and the creative potential of rearticulating, enlivening, and rearranging the very social categories that peripheralize a group's existence" (Tsing 1994:279). Over the course of Chapter 1, I discuss the various ways that black migrants in postwar Britain were relegated to marginal positions in British society, especially pertaining to issues of race, immigration, and exclusivist British nationalism. Finally, in this historical context, I also investigate the rise of Britain's carnival movement in the postwar era, which developed as a cultural and political response to marginalization and violence perpetuated against black migrant communities, as I show in Chapters 1 and 5.

Music, Performance Art, and Questions of Value

As an overarching theme in this dissertation, questions of value are used to not only thread each of the following chapters together, but also interrogate how value and meaning is produced through carnival and carnival arts. Doing so, however, does present some unique challenges. The immediate challenge stems from the fact that there is not a singular, coherent literature or discourse that can be described as "value theory," and across the existing literature,

there are entirely different conceptions of value that are being interrogated: economic, ethical, and semiotic among them. Additionally, the literature predominately focuses on how value is produced, transformed, stored, and transmitted by subjects through some form of a token (an object) and within a system of exchange. This object- and exchange-oriented approach to the study of value can be seen in the classic works of Karl Marx on commodity exchange ([1867] 1972) and Marcel Mauss on gift exchange ([1925] 1990), as well as in several contemporary studies in anthropology among scholars interested in interrogating the relationship between things and people in particular times, places, and contexts (Appadurai 1986; Munn 1986; Weiner 1992; Myers 2001 and 2002; Tsing 2015). Their works have been integral in the development of a field known as "material culture studies."

In recent years, there have also been theoretical developments in anthropology that has attempted to move the discourse on value beyond the study of commodities, objects, and systems of exchange as well. The two scholars at the forefront of this recent transition are David Graeber and Michael Lambek, where they largely theorize value as the product of "actions" that become meaningful to social actors (Graeber 2001, 2005, 2013; Lambek 2013, 2015). In addition to anthropologists, music scholars have begun to adapt these various theories and approaches to show how value can be produced and transmitted through cultural goods and *particular* kinds of acts, such as musicking and performance (Shipley 2013; Taylor 2015, 2017; and Beaster-Jones 2016). Considering this broad terrain on the study of value, I will provide a closer examination of various theorizations of value in these works, classic and contemporary, before showing how I intend to integrate particular theories of value with my ethnography on London's carnival arts scene. First, I begin with the classic models of Marx and Mauss, two paradigms that have largely been the foundation for the study of value in the social sciences.

In Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production, he endeavors to theorize the substance of value, which, for him, is centered on productive labor and commodity exchange. According to Marx, value production requires a medium of representation (a token) with both qualitative and quantitative properties that satisfies human wants/desires, having both a use value and an exchange value, and is also the product of human labor. Marx argues that the utility of a thing, in and of itself, is not sufficient for it to be a depository of value, as a thing can have a use value without having (economic) value. In order for a thing to acquire an economic value, and attain the status of a commodity, it must be both useful and exchangeable, as "exchange value is the *only* form in which the value of commodities can manifest itself or be expressed" (emphasis added, 1972:305). In addition to distinguishing use value from exchange value, Marx also discusses another form of (unmarked) value that accrues from the socially necessary labor time expended to produce a particular commodity. This has been called the "labor theory of value."

The other classic model on the study of value in the social sciences comes from the writings of Marcel Mauss on the nature of human transaction and social contracts through rituals of gift exchange. In *The Gift*, Mauss sought to understand why people in gift economies who were recipients of gifts felt obliged to reciprocate and make a return gift. What he found is that people in gift economies did not give simply out of a sense of generosity, but rather out of self-interest. Part of the reason, he uncovers, is because the objects themselves are understood to be an extension of the person who gave the gift, taking on the "spirit" or personality of its original owner. Thus, as Mauss puts it: "to make a gift of something to someone is to make a present of some part of oneself" (1990:16). In other words, because the "spirit" of the owner is entangled in

the gift, this compels the recipient to not only receive the gift, but also make a return.[5] In Mauss's writing, he shows how value can be understood beyond that which has been produced as a result of market economic forces, to those that are engendered through particular kinds of social relations, alliances and obligations forged between individuals and groups through processes of exchange and reciprocity. While Mauss's theories on the rituals of gift-giving are an alternative approach to value beyond a focus on productive labor and commodity exchange, like Marx's writings on commodities, it is still very much centered on the study of objects and exchange.

In the anthropological literature on value since Marx and Mauss, emphases on objects and exchange have largely continued to be a persistent theme. However, several scholars have extended the theories of value by Marx and Mauss either through critique, building upon them directly, or bridging the two together to create a more dynamic understanding of how value is made and circulated. Of these scholars, Arjun Appadurai's interventions in *The Social Life of Things* (1986) have undoubtedly been the most influential text on the study of value in relation to objects.

Appadurai's introduction chapter is an interrogation of commodities and exchange; however, he radically breaks away from the Marxist framework in two critical ways. First, while Marx views commodities as that which is produced by human labor for a commercial market, Appaduari argues that commodities are not purely a phenomenon of capitalism, but could also be found in societies without formal markets. Secondly, Appadurai argues the commodity status of

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[5] In *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-while-Giving* (1992), Annette Weiner tested Mauss's theories of gift-giving and reciprocity in Papua New Guinea and found that some objects existed as "inalienable possessions." These, she argued, had transcendent value, where a sense of loss was the essence its value. Consequently, Weiner shows how, in some cases, "things exchanged are about things kept" (1992:10), a phenomenon she calls "keeping-while-giving."

a thing is not inherent, and that all things have commodity potential. Considering this, he proposes that the analysis of a commodity should focus on its "total trajectory from production, through exchange/distribution, to consumption" (1986:13). This approach foregrounds the specific paths and diversions of commodities, its "life history" and "cultural biography," and accounts for potential transformations of value in objects that may occur through exchange, as they circulate back and forth between different contexts, conditions, and even social worlds.

Additionally, in these various contexts, Appaduari notes that there may exist some shared standards of value among actors, which he calls "regimes of value."[6] However, as objects are exchanged across different regimes, Appadurai suggests that "value coherence may be highly variable from situation to situation, and from commodity to commodity" (1986:15). In Chapter 3 of this dissertation, I incorporate Appaduari's theory on regimes of value to my analysis of NHC street festival and its social actors. This is done in order to not only reveal different forms of signification that arise among distinct groups and institutions that take part in the street festival, but also illustrate how the NHC operates across multiple, co-existing (and oftentimes competing) regimes of value during its annual production and execution.

In addition to interrogating transformations of value in objects through its movement between varying value regimes, Appadurai develops another theory that concerns the politics of reputation in what he has called "tournaments of value." According to Appadurai, tournaments of value are "complex periodic events that are removed in some culturally well-defined way from the routines of economic life," and "participation in them is likely to be both a privilege of those in power and an instrument of status contests between them." In such tournaments,

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[6] Two excellent ethnographic case studies of this phenomenon are *Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art* by Fred R. Myers (2002) and *The Mushroom at the End of the World* by Anna Tsing (2015).

Appadurai notes that there is a type of currency that exists in its structure and operation, which is "set apart through well understood cultural diacritics," distinguishable norms and standards through which forms of value (status, rank, fame, reputation, etc.) are assigned to participating actors (21). Moreover, as a special arena that is subject to special rules, Appadurai suggests that what are exchanged in tournaments of value are "tokens of value that can be transformed into other media only by a complex set of steps" (50).

The examples that Appadurai notes as being representative of this phenomenon are the Melanesian *kula*, the potlatch, art auctions, and the Central Asian *buzkashi*. As my dissertation attests, music scholarship has much to offer to the discourse on tournaments of value, especially as it relates to music competitions. Drawing on Appadurai's theory of tournaments of value in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, I provide an ethnography of the contemporary London Calypso Tent and illustrate the ways in which the dynamics of music performance (as sound, expression, communication, staging, and stylized presentation) in synchronic form, becomes the primary medium through which value is realized, measured, and ranked within the musical tournament of value.

While the works of Marx, Mauss, and Appadurai are seen as paradigmatic models for the study of value, scholars such as David Graeber and Michael Lambek have also made invaluable contributions to its study and extension. This has been done primarily through their theorizing of value in ways that do not privilege analyses of objects, commodities, and systems of exchange above all else. Instead, they argue that value production stems from "actions" that become meaningful to social actors. Though their premises align, they theorize value and action in different ways. Both have influenced my own thinking on value in particular ways, which I share below.

In his theory on value, Michael Lambek offers a useful formulation of value that not only centers action, but also distinguishes between labor and action: the former produces economic forms of value (labor), while the latter produces "ethical" values that are incommensurable with economic ones (i.e., meaning, significance, a specific attitude, or approach to life). To further reinforce the distinction between labor and action, and market value from ethical values that are external to the market, Lambek uses a music example as a case in point. The example Lambek invokes is the difference between playing the violin, where value comes from the pleasure of playing, as opposed to playing the violin in order to make a living, or as the "means to an external end like fame or fortune" (2013:142).

In addition to specifically citing a music example, Lambek theorizes action in another way that I believe is particularly insightful for music studies. According to Lambek's theory of ethical value, there are two discernible modalities of action: *practice* and *performance*. Practice, in Lambek's view, refers to actions that are ongoing and continuous, the "doing rather than the done," while performance (or the performance of acts) is divided up, marked as specific, and discontinuous (2015:10). Both modalities of action (practice and performance) are extremely useful for analyzing varying aspects of carnival and carnival activities. For example, this formulation of the differences between practice and performance provides a way of explaining how and why carnivalists view "carnival" and the "NHC street festival" quite differently; the former is understood as a *practice*, consisting of 363 days of preparation, planning, production, promoting, and rehearsing for NHC, while the latter is simply the culmination of a year-long endeavor, a 2-day street festival for a public audience (the *performance*). These distinctions are explored at length in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of this dissertation.

In *Toward an Anthropological Study of Value*, Graeber begins his theorization of value

by posing the following question: "What if one did try to create a theory of value starting from the assumption that what is ultimately being evaluated are not things, but actions?" (2001:49). While immensely influenced by the theories of Marx and Mauss on value, particularly with the political implications of their works, Graeber sees value as the product of action, rather than productive labor and gift exchange alone. According to Graeber, value can be best understood as "the way in which actions become meaningful to the actors by being incorporated in some larger, social totality" (2001:xii). The larger social totality that Graeber is referring to is society, the "total process through which all . . . activity is coordinated, and value, in turn, [is] the way that actors see their own activity as meaningful as part of it" (2001:76).

In addition to theorizing "action," Graeber also interrogates the "politics of value" in his writings. While Appadurai discusses a "politics of value" in *The Social Life of Things* as well, their approaches to analyzing the political dimensions of value production vary greatly. According to Appadurai, "value creation is a *politically mediated* process" that is linked by and through forms of exchange (emphasis added, 1986:6). As an illustration of this phenomenon, Appadurai focuses his attention largely on the analysis of practices and patterns of consumption, building on the work of sociologist Jean Baudrillard (1981). More specifically, his theory of a politics of value considers how dominant groups, or members of the elite class in market economies, exert political control and influence on customary behavioral systems, sumptuary laws, and other taste-making mechanisms, thereby manipulating desire and consumer demand for particular goods and commodities. For Appadurai, the fostering of desire and demand is not something that simply occurs naturally. Instead, it is the result of complex social mechanisms that mediate patterns of consumption. Thus, demand, according to Appadurai, is "the economic

expression of the political logic of consumption," which is determined by social and economic forces, and is manipulated by these forces as well (31).

Graeber's theorization on the politics of value contrasts significantly to that of Appadurai's. Whereas Appadurai is mainly interested in a politics of value that is centered on the contexts, paths, and diversions of goods and commodities, and informed by exchange and manipulations of demand, Graeber's theories on the political dimensions of value are predicated on the possibilities for social change. In this way, Graeber's thinking and writings on the politics of value are more in line with Marx's radicalism, which is largely inspired by new ways of conceiving society beyond its current form.

In *Capital*, Marx does more than simply develop a theory of value. By interrogating the contexts and conditions of productive labor, his analyses of relations of production and exchange under capitalism also revealed their linkages to class formation and the class struggle. In particular, his analyses shed light on the predicament of impoverished wage-laborers in modern bourgeois society and illuminated the ways in which alienation and the exploitation of workers were key mechanisms in establishing and maintaining the capitalist wage-system, class differentiation, and class order. Thus *Capital*, with its analyses of productive labor and the production of surplus value for capitalists, was intended to explain to workers what they were struggling against and inspire a working-class revolution that would overthrow the capitalist system.

While Marx's theory of value is predicated on productive labor and the reproduction of labor-power under capitalism, Graeber highlights that Marx's approach to theorizing value was a way of interrogating the creation of particular social worlds that are collectively made and remade. Considering this, Graeber states that many people "miss the mark" when interpreting

Marx's labor theory of value. According to Graeber, Marx did not intend for his labor theory of value to be interpreted as simply a scientific law based on units of labor in the production of commodities, but was rather an attempt to foreground and answer an existential question, which he poses in the following way: "assuming that we do collectively make our world, that we collectively remake it daily, then why is it that we somehow end up creating a world that few of us particularly like, most find unjust, and over which no one feels they have any ultimate control?" (Graeber 2013:222). It is in this interpretation of Marx that Graeber finds a compelling model for analyzing the social contexts of value production alongside politics, which is centered on human creativity (physical and mental).

One of the key political implications of theories of value, according to Graeber, concerns the critical role of the imagination for envisioning possibilities and inspiring actions to bring alternative social worlds into being, especially in contexts of violence and exploitation, though it is largely overlooked in the anthropological literature. According to Graeber, it is "value that brings universes into being," where the imagination and acts of imagining are linked to political projects for the realization of value (2013). Thinking of the political potential of value in this way has led Graeber to expound on the imagination far more than most other scholars of value in anthropology (see also Graeber 2011). In linking the imagination to politics and politics to value and meaning, Graeber suggests that political struggles are undergirded by efforts to not only establish what value is, but also promote and project those values. Coinciding with this, he then asserts that "the ultimate freedom is not the freedom to create or accumulate value, but to decide (collectively or individually) what it is that makes life worth living. In the end, then, politics is about the meaning of life" (2001:88).

While the insights of Marx, Appadurai, and Graeber are extremely useful for unpacking both the "politics of value" and the political implications that stem from studies of value, I am left with two fundamental questions that remain largely unaddressed in this literature: 1) Why is there little to no attention given to the interconnections between race, gender, and class, and the specific ways that they influence value production and inform differing conceptions of a politics of value? 2) What would the discourse on value look like more generally when it is premised from the experiences, knowledges, and agency of members of black, ethnic minority communities in Western societies who are racialized, underrepresented, dispossessed, and historically exploited?[7]

Considering this gap of knowledge in the anthropological literature, this dissertation extends the discourse on value by taking into account the impact of structural inequality and asymmetrical power relations in the lives of racialized peoples. As my ethnography will show, experiences of racism and other oppressive forms of marginalization also affect how people attribute meaning and significance to particular things, places and spaces, and even actions. With this in mind, I argue that the study of value, then, is as much about interrogations of something's usefulness and worth, and meaning and significance, as it is about power differentials that exists between things and people in particular times and contexts.

For music scholars, and especially ethnomusicologists, anthropological theories of value has opened new possibilities for analyzing music, performance, festivals, and music markets in contexts all over the world, as can be seen in recent publications by Jesse Shipley, Jayson Beaster-Jones, and Timothy Taylor. For example, in *Living the Hiplife*, Shipley writes about how

[7] While class-based analyses are the primary way that value is interrogated in the anthropological literature, there have been some important studies on value that are grounded in gender-based analyses (Strathern 1984, 1988; Weiner 1992; Meneley 1996). However, race is generally treated as irrelevant or peripheral phenomena to conceptions of value in the broader literature.

value (aesthetic, moral, linguistic, and economic) is made and transformed through the celebration of entrepreneurship associated with the cultural practice of "hiplife," a Ghanaian popular music genre that blends hip hop beat-making and rap with highlife and Akan story-telling. According to Shipley, the concept of "celebrity" mediates value in hiplife, which stands in for labor and material wealth, and transforms the aesthetics of black diasporic cultural exchange and circulation into forms of musical value that can be converted into economic value. These aesthetics include linguistic precision, newness, cosmopolitanism, travel, etc., as Ghanaian youth and hiplife musicians "try to make themselves into celebrities" through entrepreneurial aesthetics and practices (Shipley 2013:20).

Music in the World: Selected Essays by Timothy Taylor (2017) is an historical and ethnographic overview of the relationship between value and music, which consists of surveys of various musical phenomena in different times, places, and contexts. This includes treatments of musical affect, the commodification of music and its mediation through a range of technological mediums (player pianos, phonograph, and radio), the genrefication, festivalization, and branding of world music, the preservation of cultural forms, practices, and works by UNESCO, and the commodification of (musical) taste under neoliberal capitalism. From music treatises in the early modern era to music in the digital age of streaming, *Music in the World* illuminates the complex processes of change that music has undergone over many centuries, particularly as it relates to music production and consumption practices. Moreover, the work stands as a testament for why the historicization of music matters, and not in simple binary terms such as pre-commodified/commodified or pre-globalization/globalization. There are reasons why these changes occurred, and even within broader changes that can be distinctly discerned, there are phases within those, critical moments that also must be accounted for in order to better

understand changes in the meaning and valuation of music over time.

To this end, Taylor actually begins the book in a manner that, at first glance, seems at odds with its scope. Instead of discussing capitalism or globalization at the outset, Taylor begins his investigation by revisiting the culture concept in anthropology and its analysis in ethnographic form. Taylor's use of "culture" in the book is inspired by the interpretative theories of American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who has famously theorized culture as being a "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1973:89). Building on this emphasis on meaning and signification, Taylor argues that Geertz's approach to analyzing culture can be particularly useful for music scholars in their ethnographic endeavors to uncover and better understand what is meaningful to social actors. However, attention must be focused on real people in order to analyze "meanings produced in particular cultures in particular places in times" (16).

In Chapter 10 of *Music in the World*, Taylor connects Geertz's concept of culture to questions and theorizations of value in anthropology, highlighting places of overlap between the literatures, especially as it pertains to analyses of meaning and signification among social actors. This synthesized approach that Taylor advocates has far-reaching implications for studies of cultural and musical phenomena, as it allows for analyses of meaning and value across multiple domains, including social, cultural, political, and economic ones, while still enabling a focus on uncovering what matters to individual social actors in particular times and contexts. In the words of Taylor, "What people find to be meaningful is what they have invested themselves in, something that resonates with their beliefs, their view of the world, the things that matter to

them. Value is a more precise way of attempting to understand meaning" (174).

In the chapters that follow this introduction, I endeavor to contribute to this growing literature on the musical and cultural study of value, meaning, and signification by expanding on the works of Appadurai, Graeber, Lambek, and Taylor specifically. By using value as both a methodological and analytical approach to investigate musical activity, cultural expression, artistic modes of representation, and other forms of action in the carnival domain, I aim to show how meaning is made and transmitted among black carnivalists in London through the practice, performance, and production of carnival and carnival arts.

OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is organized into five main chapters and a concluding chapter. Chapter 1 begins with a social history of Caribbean migration and resettlement to the UK in the postwar period, where I show how issues of race, citizenship, and national belonging among black migrant communities in the UK provided the context for the development of Britain's Caribbean Carnival Movement in the postwar period. In the midst of rampant anti-black racism and xenophobia in postwar UK, London-based Caribbean migrants were able to mobilize their marginality into a powerful carnival movement, resulting in the production of what has become the single largest street festival in Europe and an annual, multimillion-pound enterprise.

Chapter 2 is a musical and ethnographic account of the contemporary NHC street festival, where I posit NHC as a distinct social space of value. In order to illustrate the distinctiveness of NHC throughout the chapter, I discuss the particular spatial production and configuration of the street festival, the plethora of music and artistic performances that transpire on the carnival grounds, as well as how music shapes the overall carnival experience by mediating socio-spatial relations.

Expanding on the production of the NHC festival space, Chapter 3 unveils various economic, social, cultural, and political "regimes of value" that co-exist and compete in the carnival domain among NHC attendees, stakeholders, corporate sponsors, and culture producers. In this chapter, I provide accounts of the range of collaborations, negotiations, and tensions that occur and subsist between various individuals, groups, and institutions that take part in the street festival and contribute to its production process. In doing so, the chapter reveals how values are never simply parallel, but dialectical and confrontational, and as they are always implicated in relations of power.

Chapter 4 interrogates London's carnival arts scene as a broader cultural production among black Britons that spans beyond the two-day street festival. This is illustrated by focusing on carnival musicking throughout the month of August, with an emphasis on calypso music performances. The chapter begins with an overview of British calypso and the ways in which postwar calypso music recordings served as important articulations of the intersections of blackness with Britishness. Afterwards, I demonstrate the continued importance of calypso as part of the NHC festival culture vis-à-vis the London Calypso Tent, the premier calypso song competition in the UK. This is explored by drawing on Arjun Appadurai's theories regarding "tournaments of value," where I illustrate how contemporary valuations of calypso in Britain are not predicated on the production, sale, and circulation of recordings, but on the quality of calypso performances during competition. In this context, *performance* is the principal medium through which value is assigned to calypso artists and their music during the NHC festival season.

Chapter 5 investigates the racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of black carnivalists in Britain by bridging the anthropological literature on value with theories related to black radicalism, inspired by the writings of political scientist Cedric Robinson ([1983] 2000)

and historian Robin D. G. Kelley (2002) on the Black Radical Tradition. Framing the BRT as a "politics of value," I interrogate the linkages between the imagination, politics, and artistic creativity among black carnivalists in London's scene, past and present, and show how notions of value can be produced through forms of empowerment.

In the sixth and final chapter, I provide final analyses and conclusions about music, performance, and questions of value in London's carnival arts scene.

A Note on Being African American and Conducting Field Research on UK Black Diasporas

Between 2013 and 2017, I attended as many carnival events, meetings, rehearsals, competitions, and workshops as I could on a consistent basis, year-in and year-out. While attending these events and documenting carnival activities through photography and audio/video recordings, many people I encountered in the early stages of my time in the field thought I was a journalist or professional photographer. I would regularly be asked by others in attendance, "who do you work for?" Most people were shocked to learn that I was actually a graduate student researcher from the United States. Also, because I'm black, most people I encountered automatically assumed that I was of Caribbean or African parentage; at the very least my grandparents were from the Caribbean islands or the African continent. The reason for this widespread assumption is due in large part because the overwhelming majority of the UK's black population can directly trace their lineage back to a specific Caribbean island or African country.

Upon hearing my American accent and learning that I was neither a journalist, nor a professional photographer, but a U.S. graduate student researcher, people were always curious as to how and why I decided to study Caribbean culture in London, and carnival of all things. They would then ask me, "where you from, where you from?" Meaning, where are your parents/grandparents from? When posed this question, I would respond by saying something to

the extent like: "I was born and raised in the U.S., so were my parents, and their parents before them, and their parents before them. I am a descendant of enslaved Africans in the United States." Sometimes, I would get asked another follow-up question that attempted to get at the heart of why I would have an interest in studying aspects of Caribbean culture. It had to be *something*. I would then be asked if I had any Caribbean family members at all, to which I would respond by saying, "I have no direct familial ties to the African continent, nor the Caribbean. All I've ever known is the United States of America. I'm just African American."

I share this to highlight the fact that not once in my thirty-year life have I been asked such questions about my background while living in the U.S, nor placed in a position where I had to be so reflexive about my own blackness in this manner. However, my encounters and interactions with black Britons during field research in London made me more aware of how "American" my blackness is for the first time, and just how different my background, upbringing, and experiences in the U.S are from black people in Britain (and elsewhere). It also made me more crucially aware that I am a member of an *historic African diaspora* that was formed in the Americas during the colonial slave era, rather than a contemporary one that has been formed for other reasons. And unlike many other black groups, such as Jamaicans, Haitians, Nigerians, Ghanaians, etc., there is no such thing as a *contemporary* "African American diaspora." Thus, for many us (African Americans), our experiences and worldviews are grounded first and foremost in the politics of America, if not only America.

However, in the case of Caribbean Britons, who are the primary subjects of this dissertation, they consist of groups that have been twice "diasporized" and are suspended within both *historic* and *contemporary* diaspora formations simultaneously. More specifically, they are descendants of enslaved Africans or indentured servants from Asian countries (in the context of

the colonial Caribbean), and also members of a post-WWII generation of migrants in Britain. As such, both registers of diaspora (historic and contemporary) have shaped, and continue to shape, their experiences in the UK, as I will discuss in various parts of the dissertation. What follows then is not simply a dissertation about London's carnival arts scene alone, but a dissertation that interrogates "articulations" of a postwar Caribbean diaspora-in-the-making. This is explored by way of carnival and carnival arts practices in London, as well as through questions of value in relation to the production of London's carnival arts scene.

ONE

ON MARGINALITY AND VALUE: CARIBBEAN MIGRATION AND A POSTWAR CARNIVAL MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN

The NHC street festival is an annual celebration that takes place over the August Bank Holiday weekend in London, the last Sunday and Monday of the month. For the past 50 years, the streets of Notting Hill have been transformed into a stage for presenting Caribbean carnival arts to the general public during the festival season. This presentation of music, visual arts, theatre, and dance is implemented as an integrated art form, where the five performance arenas of Caribbean carnival (masquerade, steel pan, sound systems, and the musical genres of calypso and soca) come together as a single, meta-performance in the streets. The free event features about 60 different masquerade bands on the road, over 30 static sound systems scattered throughout the Notting Hill area, and more than two hundred independent vendors selling foods, drinks, and carnival-related paraphernalia (national flags, T-shirts, whistles, etc.) to attendees. Today, nearly 1.5 million people attend the NHC every year, helping the event earn the nickname "the largest street festival in Europe."

The NHC has not always been a premier British cultural event, or an international tourist attraction. Within the festive merriment that NHC incites today, its annual production also evokes the historical struggle of black migrants against marginalization in postwar British society. In response to rampant issues of xenophobia, anti-black racism, and violence directed at ethnic minority communities during the 1950s and '60s, carnival was mobilized as a way to not only foster a sense of community among the disparate black migrant groups, enabling new alliances and solidarities to form across cultural difference, but also create a new sense of space and place for black people and black culture in Britain. Thus, in order to best understand what

the NHC is, how the carnival movement began, and what the street festival means to black carnivalists who are invested in its annual production, analyses of London's contemporary carnival scene must also take into account the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions permeating British society that emanates specifically from black immigration and resettlement in the UK since the 1950s. This includes an interrogation of 1) the politicization of race in postwar Britain and its influence on immigration, citizenship, and national belonging (Gilroy 1987; Jackson 1988) and 2) the impact of increased visibility (and audibility) of black and other marginalized groups within the everyday social life of Britain, or what cultural theorist Stuart Hall has described elsewhere as the "margins coming into representation" (1997:34).

As stated in the Introduction Chapter of this dissertation, analyses of value in the anthropological literature does not account for processes of racialization and structural oppression, nor their impact on the production of value(s). Considering this oversight on the relationship between forms of marginality and value, the following chapter is intended to serve a dual purpose. First, it presents a general history of Caribbean migration to Britain and the development of the postwar carnival movement, scene, and street festival in London from the 1950s to the present-day. These, as I will show, transpired within the context of British racism and xenophobia, and therefore, they must be accounted for in an analysis of value and carnival. Secondly, the chapter also provides empirical evidence that structural inequality and asymmetrical power relations, which produce lived experiences of marginality, directly impact how value and meaning are assigned to certain things, spaces and places, and particular kinds of actions.

By including an analytic framework focused on experiences of marginality among Caribbean migrants and their descendants in the UK, I will show that notions of "value" cannot

be fully understood without critical attention to existing power relations and modalities of power in lives of social actors in specific times, places, and contexts. As will be illustrated in the following sections of this chapter, despite the growth of a race-based, exclusivist nationalism in postwar UK that relegated black migrants to the margins of British society, Caribbean Britons began to assert the legitimacy of their own culture in the nation's capital to contest British hegemony and anti-black racism. In the process, carnival came to acquire particular kinds of significance, value, and meaning to black/Caribbean Britons over the years as not only a tool of resistance to combat these forms of domination, but also a crucial means through which the "Mother Country" could be dramatically re-imagined and reshaped from below.

LONDON IS THE PLACE FOR ME

> Places may be thought of as open articulations of connections," [and] "identities of subjects and identities of places constructed through interrelations not only challenge notions of past authenticities but also hold open the possibility of change in the future (Massey 1999:288).
>
> It was precisely claims of citizenship and belonging rooted in an understanding that Blackness could be British and British could be Black that provided the cultural and ideological force for colonial migrants to strike back at the Empire in such a way that disoriented ways of thinking about who or what constituted belonging in the British nation (Perry 2013:12).

Caribbean Migration, Resettlement, and the Politicization of Race in Postwar Britain

On June 22, 1948, the MV *Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury in London with 492 Caribbean passengers aboard, having arrived from Jamaica. Anticipating the ship's arrival, the headline of the *Evening Standard*, one of Britain's daily newspapers, read, "Welcome Home! Evening Standard plane greets the 400 sons of Empire."[8] The great Trinidadian calypsonian Lord Kitchener was one of the *Windrush* passengers aboard the ship, and when he stepped out onto the dock, a British Pathé news reporter filmed him singing a composition he wrote during the month-

[8] See article for more details: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/goodlife/11683233/Windrush-Generation-They-thought-we-should-be-planting-bananas.html

long voyage to Britain. This piece was called "London is the Place for Me," and it not only portrayed the deep-rooted fascination of a migrant with the "metropolis of the modern world," but also represented a British subject coming home to the "Mother Country." Smiling brightly before cameras as he's announced the "King of Calypso" by the reporter, Kitchener sings,

> London is the place for me
> London this lovely city
> You can go to France or America,
> India, Asia, or Australia
> But you must come back to London city
>
> Well believe me I am speaking broadmindedly
> I am glad to know my Mother Country
> I have been travelling to countries years ago
> But this is the place I wanted to know
> London that is the place for me.[9]

Today, both the *Windrush* ship and the song "London is the Place for Me" have since been etched in postwar British history as preeminent symbols of black migration and resettlement to the UK in the postwar era. They also are regularly drawn upon as sources of inspiration for the production of carnival arts in London, as I will show in various iterations throughout the dissertation, and later in this chapter.

In the aftermath of WWII, Britain underwent drastic socio-political changes stemming from economic decline, the steady demise of the British Empire, and Britain's waning place in the world as a global superpower. The devastation of the war and growing economic depression led to the mass exodus of several million Britons after the war to various countries of the Commonwealth, namely Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe). Coinciding with these changes were patterns of large-scale international immigration to the UK among Caribbean, South Asian, and African peoples, beginning primarily

[9] A video clip of the historic arrival of the *Windrush* and Lord Kitchener singing for British Pathé News can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDH4IBeZF-M.

in the 1950s. These large-scale migration patterns were due in large part to the emergence of new labor demands in postwar Britain, in addition to the politics of Britain's colonial governance at the time. With the passing of the British Nationality Act of 1948, the new act granted citizenship to all subjects of the British Empire as a way of attracting cheap labor in order to rebuild the war-ridden nation and revitalize the declining economy. Through British recruitment efforts to fill its labor shortage by soliciting workers from within its colonial territories, the UK was thus seen as a viable option for subjects of the Commonwealth to gain full employment in a large-scale economy and begin a new life in the "Mother Country."

Since 1950, Britain's black population has grown exponentially relative to its population in the pre-WWII period, which is estimated to have been less than 30,000 total. Among the first groups of postwar migrant laborers to arrive in the UK were from the Commonwealth Caribbean, and during the first two decades of the postwar era (1950-1970), Caribbean people from the British West Indies (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, St. Lucia, Guyana, St. Vincent, Dominica, Montserrat, etc.) migrated to the UK in waves of tens of thousands every year. This pioneering cohort of first-generation Caribbean migrants became known as the "Windrush Generation," in honor of those who arrived in 1948 aboard the MV *Empire Windrush*, and they are generally posited as the progenitors of the new, postwar "multi-racial Britain" (Phillips and Phillips 1998).[10] A table of Caribbean migration and resettlement in the UK between 1951 and 1988 can be found below (Table 1.1).

[10] Post-WWII first-generation Afro-Caribbean Britons are regarded as the "Windrush Generation" in honor of one of the earliest ships to transport Caribbean migrants to the UK, the MV *Empire Windrush* in 1948.

Year	Caribbean Birthplace	UK Born children of WI born (est.)	Best estimate Caribbean ethnic pop. person	Sources
1951	17,218		18,000	Census
1961	173,659	26,000	200,000	Census
1966	330,780	50,000	380,000	Census (10% count)
1971	304,070	244,000	548,000	Census
1981a	295,179	250,565	545,744	Census
1981b	268,000	244,000	519,000	Labour Force Survey, 1982
1984	242,000	281,000	529,000	Labour Force Survey, 1988
1986-1988	233,000	262,000	495,000	Population Trends, 1990

Table 1.1 Caribbean migration and resettlement in the UK between 1951 and 1988
Source: Peach 1991

Between 1955 and 1974, Britain witnessed its largest cycle of Caribbean immigration to the UK, and in that time frame, regulations regarding immigration were eventually implemented to stifle the number of Caribbean migrants allowed to enter Britain. Since that time, increases among Caribbeans in the UK have come primarily by way of the British-born population, as noted by historian Nancy Foner (2005:132-33).

Today, black Britons of African, Caribbean, or mixed heritage make up roughly 3% (1.9 million) of the total UK population (64.1 million). Less than 1% of the total population is of Caribbean heritage (approximately 600,000), with more than half (350,000+) living in London alone. Of these, Jamaicans are the dominant representative group of Caribbean Britons in all of the UK, including London.[11] Finally, it is useful to note that members of the "Windrush Generation" were not actually "immigrants," politically speaking; rather, they were *migrants* who were issued British passports and granted British citizenship prior to their arrival, and thus

[11] 160,000 people listed Jamaica as their birthplace in the 2011 Census.

had a legal right to unrestricted entry in the UK as Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKCs) before the passing of the Immigration Act of 1962.

The majority of newly-arrived Caribbean migrants in Britain were of a working class background. Some arrived in Britain seeking better opportunities for themselves and their children, while others sought to work in Britain for a brief period, save money, then return back to their original home country. There were also a number of returning soldiers who had fought for the British during the Second World War and had come to settle in Britain after the war. The majority of postwar Caribbean migrants gained employment in the service industry primarily. Some were domestic workers, and many of them worked two or three odd jobs at a time. A large section of Caribbean migrants found jobs as transport operatives, working for the National Rail Service and London Transport (mostly men), or in the National Health Services as nurses in hospitals (mostly women). A residual effect of Caribbean family members working for London Transport in particular resulted in several Caribbean communities forming around or near bus garages throughout the city, most notably in Brixton, New Cross, Peckham, Hackney, and Notting Hill, as well as in the surrounding neighborhoods of these places. Over the next 60 years, these areas became crucial sites where new roots were being established and new black British cultural identities were being cultivated.

Although Caribbean migrants were establishing new roots in the UK, it is important to note that they were also actively maintaining various ties to their countries of origin as well, namely by sending remittances back to the Caribbean, or engaging in particular social and cultural activities that helped to sustain these connections. This included gathering in each other's homes to cook and share Caribbean foods, play recreational games like cards or dominoes, and listen/dance to music recordings from the Caribbean. In an interview I conducted

with Michael La Rose (London-based carnival historian), he shared the following with me about his family in Britain during the early years of the postwar period:

> Like most migrant Caribbean families, we went to stay with other families from our island. In that house, people talked in the Caribbean language, people talked about what was going on at home and people would send packages up [from the Caribbean]—of food, of records. And when the records came, they would put the record on and all the adults in the house would sit around the heater and listen intently to these kaiso records, calypso records. And in that way, they knew what was happening at home. They knew the double entendre. They knew the jokes and it was just entertainment for them and a kind of nostalgia (2015).

These spaces for socializing were important for not only maintaining cross-border ties, but also developing strategies to bring the diverse black ethnic groups of Britain together and begin building across their cultural differences. According to La Rose, Caribbeans and the other minority ethnic groups eventually had to come to terms with the fact that "a black community [was] develop[ing] here in Britain, which included Asians from Pakistan and India, and West Africans from Nigeria and Ghana. They all came roughly at the same time and they either had to bind and bond, or be attacked by the local population" (2015). One of the many ways these groups would be attacked and marginalized by the dominant population in Britain was through racialized notions of British nationality. This then set the stage for the emergence of a new, "black" political identity in Britain that would be shared among the diverse groups from the Caribbean, Africa, *and* the Indian subcontinent as a way of mobilizing against racialized disadvantage and discrimination (Hall 1997; Alexander 2009).

While the Nationality Act of 1948 afforded the Windrush Generation legal rights to work and live in the UK, owning a British passport did little to socially legitimate their status as Britons; instead, non-white migrants were seen as "dark strangers" (Patterson 1963), relegated to second-class citizenship, while claims to "Britishness" were reserved solely for the country's white population. In response to the massive influx of immigration among Caribbean, African,

and Asian peoples, the postwar era ushered in very specific processes of racialization in Britain that were "structurally determined, politically organized and ideologically inflected . . . within relations of domination and subordination" (Green and Carter 1988:23).

In a study of postwar immigration sentiments among members of the Labour and Conservative Parties, Carter et al. (2000) observed the various ways in which race and immigration were conflated in discussions of the national character and identity of postwar Britain. As their study shows, ministers and other state officials began propagating conceptions of Britain as culturally and racially homogenous (i.e., white) in response to black migration to Britain as early as the late 1940s under the leadership of Prime Minster Clement Atlee, providing the foundation of the political discourse on immigration in Britain for decades to come. One example of this that they cite is of an immigration officer who stated that communities of color have no place in the concept of England because they do not share similar attachments to the country like people of British stock (white people) in the Commonwealth (Carter et al. 2000:36). The irony of the officer's statement, which positions Britain's communities of color outside of the concept of England, is that it grossly ignores the vital role that Caribbean, African, and Asian subjects of the British Empire have played in projects of nation and empire-building itself. Thus, there could be no conception of modern England or Britain without people of African and Asian descent.

In "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities" (1997b), Stuart Hall offers insights into this paradox of British exclusivist nationalism in the postwar period as experienced from the perspective of Britain's growing communities of color:

> People like me who came to England in the 1950 have been there for centuries; symbolically, we have been there for centuries. *I was coming home*. I am the sugar at the bottom of the English cup of tea. I am the sweet tooth, the sugar plantations that rotted generations of English children's teeth. There are thousands of others beside me that are, you know, the cup of tea itself. Because they don't grow it in Lancashire, you know. Not

> a single tea plantation exists within the United Kingdom. This is the symbolization of English identity—I mean, what does anybody in the world know about an English person except that they can't get through the day without a cup of tea. Where does it come from? Ceylon—Sri Lanka, India. *That is the outside history that is inside the history of the English. There is no English history without that other history* (emphasis added, Hall 1997b:41).

Hall's insights serves as an illustration of the ways in which Caribbean people (and other former colonial subjects in Africa and the Indian subcontinent) have historically occupied the spaces of the margins in British history due to the propagation of uneven social relations that stretches back centuries, indexed by the legacies of slavery, colonialism, and empire. In this historical context of core-periphery relations, the margins were crucial sites of exploitative value production for Britain and its empire. With the "peripheralization of the core," following migration from the colonies to Britain, the postwar Caribbean population continued to occupy a marginal place/position in British society through the particular ways that immigration and national belonging were being racialized.

The postwar phenomenon of racializing both immigration and nationality by presenting Britain as a homogenous, white nation, and immigrants of color as foreign "Others," provided a means to distinguish "the British" from the "non-British" (i.e., non-white "colonials") according to rigid, racial color lines despite what was stamped on one's passport. Due to the racialized reconstruction of "Britishness" in the postwar period, the terms by which "black" and "British" were established pitted them against each other as mutually exclusive identities, and black presence was therefore seen as a major disruption and intrusion into what cultural theorist Paul Gilroy calls the "vision of authentic British national life" (Gilroy 1993:7). This engendered varying forms of social exclusion and marginality, as postwar migrants from Britain's colonies were made to feel like foreigners in the very place they had long regarded as their "Mother Country." They were merely seen as "colonials," not full-citizens.

While the devastation of the Second World War and postwar British governmental policies and market forces were largely responsible for the socio-economic woes that plagued British citizens, issues concerning job placement, wages, and adequate housing were nonetheless linked to rising immigration, with Caribbean, African, and Asian peoples seen as the root of the growing problems in British society. In *Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987), Paul Gilroy discusses the immigration question in postwar Britain at length, noting how British public newspapers used various military metaphors to describe black immigration to the UK. These included terms such as "the enemy within, the unarmed invasion, alien encampments, alien territory and new commonwealth occupation" (1987:45). Such public responses illustrate the extent to which postwar immigration was viewed in predominately negative terms, where black migrants were deemed as "undesirables" in British society. These sentiments would eventually dove-tail with the implementation of racially-motivated governmental policies to control the flow of non-white immigration into the UK, policies that operationalized what Doreen Massey has called "power geometries," particularly in relation to immigration flows (1994).

Between 1962 and 1971, Britain passed three different immigration laws to attempt to reduce the number of non-white migrants entering the country (Immigration Act of 1962, 1968, and 1971). As a particular kind of "power-geometry" rooted in ideas of British nativism, the scheme targeted groups that were considered "colonial belongers," where "belonging" was defined and implemented into law based on a framing of descent (Hampshire 2005:12). One had to be born in the UK or have a parent who was born in the UK to establish belonging. This mechanism disproportionately affected Britain's colonial citizens of color in negative terms, while enabling white citizens of the Commonwealth particular advantages for entry in the UK. As a result of these policy changes during the 1960s, Caribbean migrants in particular no longer

had legal rights to freely work and live in the UK, and this has had a stifling effect on the increase of Britain's Caribbean population since the early postwar years.

The immigration question was undoubtedly one of the greatest impetuses in the politicization of race in postwar Britain, and this has been echoed through the decades post-1950. Examples of this can be seen in a number of instances, including the following: the "Keep Britain White" campaigns of Oswald Mosley in the 1950s; the "if you want a nigger for a neighbor, vote Labour" slogan used during the 1964 general elections; Enoch Powell's infamous "Rivers of Blood" speech (1968) regarding his detestation of black immigration and fears of white minoritization in Britain; Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's comments on Britain being "swamped by an alien culture" (1978); and Prime Minister David Cameron's criticisms of "state multiculturalism" as perpetuating radicalization and terrorism (2011).

The forms of marginality that black migrants and their children faced in postwar Britain did not just operate on a political or symbolic level; they also took place on social levels. In addition to not being fully accepted by the dominant English population because of marked, racial differences (e.g., having a darker skin complexion), black migrants were often criticized and discriminated against because of their distinct accents, cultural practices, and ways of socializing. Many public spaces of leisure and entertainment in London/UK were virtually off limits to them, and even religious services were oftentimes hostile environments that bred animosity. In an interview I conducted with Ishmahil Blagrove, a Britain-born Londoner of Jamaican parentage, he shared a story with me of how his parents were ostracized from church in England:

> We [Caribbean migrants] were very much entrenched in our Christian faith. We were very much entrenched in the ideas of obedience to the State. So we came here as willing subjects to participate, you know what I'm saying? However, that was a lie. And the State didn't accept us. The churches didn't accept us. There's a case of my parents arriving here for the time. They wanted to get married and were going to get married here in the

> UK. And so they attended church, to build up their church service and find a church that would accept them. They went to church, sat down in the session. At the end of it, the minister came up to them and they believed that he was going to tell them . . . He was going to welcome them to the congregation and all of that bruhah. Then he turned to them and says "Listen, please don't come back again next week. Parts of the congregation said that they would not attend if you back." You know what I mean? . . . The black experience here, we had to re-calibrate all of this notion of "Mother Country" (Blagrove 2017).

In the most extreme of cases, postwar British racism also manifested into physical violence against black communities as well. This can be seen in the 1950s in Notting Hill, as growing racial tensions eventually led to race riots in 1958.

During the 1950s, Notting Hill was a slum area and considered by most to have some of the worst housing conditions in London. It was also one of the few areas in the city where black and other ethnic minority groups could find housing, as many landlords throughout London placed advertisements for flat rentals that explicitly stated "no blacks, no dogs, no Irish." With the increase of the black population in Notting Hill during the 1950s, white working-class gangs, such as the "Teddy Boys," eventually became hostile toward the black community and would regularly harass its members. These racial tensions were also exploited by far right-wing politicians and organizational groups who strongly advocated against black immigration and wanted desperately to "Keep Britain White." This slogan was popularized by Oswald Mosley (a former Member of Parliament) and the White Defence League, and was written on walls and passed along on leaflets in the Notting Hill community.

Animosity toward the black community came to a head during the late summer of 1958, when, on August 24, 1958, nine white youths attacked five black men in separate incidents in the Notting Hill area, seriously injuring three of them. Five days later, Raymond and Majbritt Morrison, an interracial couple, were also assaulted by white youths. By midnight of the same day, crowds of over 400 white youths, many of them coming from places outside of the Notting

Hill area, were smashing in black homes, businesses, and physically assaulting black residents. In the aftermath of the Notting Hill race riot, which lasted a week, dozens of people were hurt, property damage was widespread, and approximately 140 people were arrested.[12] Though extreme displays of racial violence subsided during the remainder of the year, they manifested again in 1959 with the stabbing murder of Kelso Cochrane (a Notting Hill community member and carpenter from Antigua) by a gang of white youths. This generated an immediate outcry from the local community for justice, justice that is still yet to be realized as no one has been charged with his murder after nearly 50 years.

These two tragedies, the Notting Hill race riots of 1958 and the 1959 murder of Kelso Cochrane, became instrumental catalysts that led to attempts by black and ethnic minority migrants to devise unifying strategies to heal from, and fight against, the onslaught of social neglect, xenophobia, and violence in postwar Britain. Their collective efforts gave birth to Britain's postwar carnival movement, which crystallized into the production of two separate, yet interrelated, streams of carnival events that aimed to combat the systemic and endemic social ills that afflicted Britain's communities of color: Claudia Jones's "Caribbean Carnivals" (1959-1964) and the contemporary Notting Hill Carnival that emerged from Rhaune Laslett's "Notting Hill Fair," (1966-present). Moreover, Notting Hill itself became the site of a new, creative resistance against structures of dominance in British society. In the pages that follow, I will discuss the important contributions that Jones, Laslett, and several others have made to the development of London's contemporary carnival arts scene.

[12] See more details about the Notting Hill Riot of 1958 at http://www.blackpast.org/gah/notting-hill-riots-1958.

Claiming Space and Making Place through Carnival

In "The Local and the Global" (1997a), Stuart Hall describes what he calls a "cultural revolution" that has taken place in the post-WWII era, where *marginality* has become a space of power and empowerment. According to Hall, this has come about as a "*consequence of the margins coming into representation*—in art, in painting, in film, in music, in literature, in the modern arts everywhere, in politics, and in social life generally" (emphasis added, 36). In the post-WWII era, the various subaltern groups that have been historically excluded from mainstream cultural and political representation in the UK and rendered silent and invisible within historiographies of Britain (women, people of color, the LGBTQ community, and migrant populations) began to contest and acquired the means to speak for themselves for the first time, Hall notes. Through the rediscovery of their pasts and hidden histories and the re-ordering of domestic and international social relations, marginalized communities began to not only challenge dominant discourses and regimes of power in Britain, but also decenter and refashion what it means to be British today in radical ways.

One way this can be seen is through the advent of Britain's Caribbean Carnival movement that emerged in the postwar era as a manifestation of "spatial entitlement" among black/Caribbean Britons. By "spatial entitlement," I am evoking the work of historian Gaye Theresa Johnson in *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity* (2013), which focuses on anti-racist alliances and spatial politics among aggrieved black and brown communities in post-WWII Los Angeles. According to Johnson, spatial entitlement refers to the "way in which marginalized communities have created new collectivities based not just upon eviction and exclusion from physical places, but also on new and imaginative uses of technology, creativity, and spaces."

And in creating such spatial entitlements, these marginalized communities "created new articulations, new sensibilities, and new visions about the place of Black, Brown, and working-class people on the local and national landscape" (Johnson 2013:x). In the context of the UK where there was extreme opposition to black social and cultural integration in the immediate postwar period, the Caribbean carnival movement provided a critical space to combat British racism and subvert hegemonic conceptions of national belonging. In the process, the carnival movement also spawned into the single, most-attended festival in the UK (and arguably Europe) every year: the annual NHC street festival. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to the postwar carnival movement, where I provide an historical survey of the movement from Claudia Jones's "Caribbean Carnivals" in 1959, to the present-day NHC street festival.

The carnival movement in postwar Britain began with the innovations of Claudia Jones in 1959, one of the most important black international freedom fighters of the twentieth century. Jones was born in Trinidad in 1915, and originally migrated to the United States (New York) where she would become a journalist, political activist, and an important human/civil rights advocate. Some of Jones's political activities included engagements with the Communist Party USA, where she fought for the rights of workers and integration in the workplace, as well as for equality for women, especially black women. Jones was eventually incarcerated because of her affiliation and activities with the Communist Party for nine and half months, and was later deported from the US in 1955—she was also exiled from Trinidad because of her political affiliations. Jones relocated to Britain in 1955 where she would continue engaging in political and community organizing. In 1958, Jones launched *The West Indian Gazette and Afro-Asian Caribbean News* (WIG), Britain's first major black newspaper, and in the aftermath of the 1958 Notting Hill Race Riots, Jones and the WIG committee organized the "West Indian Gazette

Caribbean Carnival" the following year (1959).

Jones's first Caribbean carnival took place on January 30, 1959 at the St. Pancras Town Hall in London and was televised by the BBC. In addition to being deliberately scheduled to coincide with the Trinidad Carnival, the West Indian Gazette Caribbean Carnival was also structured in ways that were reminiscent of carnival practices in Trinidad. For instance, like the carnival in Trinidad, Jones's Caribbean Carnival included performances by calypso and steel pan musicians, as well as masquerade presentations, with some of the most notable performers being Edric Connor (Trinidadian folk singer, actor, and calypsonian), the Mighty Terror, and the Trinidad All Stars and Hi-fi steelbands.[13] Jones's carnivals would continue to take place for another five years until her untimely death in 1964 due to an ongoing chronic heart condition. Although Jones's carnivals did not directly evolve into what became the modern-day "Notting Hill Carnival," her interventions have had a lasting effect on Caribbean culture in London by not only promoting and developing carnival arts in the UK, but also providing a framework through which a distinct diaspora network could emerge through carnival, linking the overseas community in Britain to the Caribbean and other diasporic sites around the world.

The idea to bring an outdoor festival to Notting Hill developed in 1966, led by Rhaune Laslett and the London Free School (an adult education program predicated on community action). Her committee decided to hold the event in August so that it could take place outdoors during warmer weather conditions. In the summer of 1966, their efforts culminated in a neighborhood fair which sought to celebrate the cultural diversity of the area in order to bridge together the various ethnic communities of Notting Hill that were divided along social, cultural, and racial lines. This is reflected in an interview with Laslett captured in *Carnival: A*

[13] Information about performers and performances found on the official NHC website: http://www.thelondonnottinghillcarnival.com/about.html#aboutHistory

Photographic and Testimonial History of the Notting Hill Carnival (2014), where she shared her motive for creating the event. She stated,

> We felt that although West Indians, Africans, Irish, and many other nationalities all live in a very congested area, there is little communication between us. If we can infect them with a desire to participate [in the fair] then this could only have good results (Rhaune Laslett 1966 interview, in *Carnival* 2014:14).

To garner participation from the community, Laslett asked several diverse groups to perform, including the Nigerian musican Ginger Johnson and his performance group known as the "Afro-Cubans," Agnes O'Connell and her Irish Girl Pipers, a white New Orleans-style marching band, and the widely popular Trinidadian musician Russell Henderson and his steelband. It would be the ingenuity of Russell Henderson and his pan men (most notably, Sterling Betancourt) that set in motion the parade feature of the fair, as they marched up Portobello Road towards Notting Hill Gate and back again in several rounds. As witnesses claim about the 1966 Notting Hill Fair, the steel pan musicians were central to drawing out more people to participate in carnival and follow the processional, which was akin to the parade style of the Trinidad carnival that was also led by steel pan musicians. Estimates of the original Notting Hill Fairs of the late 1960s suggest about 500 people were attending the events annually, and over the years, word about the festival got around the city, the country, and even back to the Caribbean, helping the event to gradually expand.

By the end of the decade (1970), Laslett would step down due to growing racial tensions in Notting Hill, with the biggest storyline being the police raids on The Mangrove between 1969 and 1970. The Mangrove (1968-1992) was a well-established West Indian restaurant in Notting Hill that was owned by Frank Crichlow and became an important hub for black artists, entertainers, and intellectuals in its nearly 25-year history. With Laslett no longer in leadership, the Notting Hill Fair evolved into the "People's Free Carnival," and later, the "Notting Hill

Carnival," from the 1970s onwards under the guidance of Merle Major, Granville Price, Selwyn Baptiste, and Andre Shervington. During this time, the carnival began to incorporate more definitive Caribbean-styled performance traditions as well, most notably in forms of masquerade and an increased presence of steelbands.

In 1973, Leslie Palmer assumed leadership over the carnival and completely restructured NHC from a specifically localized event into a mass-scale production garnering the attention of the wider-city and country. He did this by establishing organized processional routes, improving the promotion of the event through radio and television broadcasting, incorporating more local and international live bands to perform at the event, and introducing large costume bands and Jamaican-styled sound systems to the NHC. The incorporation of sound systems in NHC is extremely important to note as they were the most popular form of music consumption among black Britons in the 1970s, and this made the NHC more appealing to a wider range of people interested in black music more generally. Moreover, the incorporation of sound systems to NHC meant that carnival was diversifying (musically and culturally) and also becoming more inclusive to a wider range of black communities as well, many of whom were not as familiar with the carnival traditions of Trinidad and the Eastern Caribbean.

In an interview I conducted with writer and music historian Lloyd Bradley, he discussed at length the influence of Jamaican sound systems on the evolution of black music in London, including its impact on the growth of the NHC as well. In the interview, Lloyd pointed out that in its earlier years, carnival primarily operated as a kind of Trinidadian-specific festival, which was dominated by steel pans and calypso music in particular. The idea of carnival, he admitted, was completely foreign to those of Jamaican heritage, like himself, because there was no such carnival in Jamaica at the time. Nonetheless, Jamaicans were overwhelmingly the majority

population of black Caribbean postwar migrants. This meant that a large sector of London's black community was not attending carnival or was being underserved in some capacity.

While the carnival movement was underway by the late 1950s, the first Jamaican sound systems were introduced to Britain a few years prior. Speaking of the cultural scene from the 1950s onwards, Bradley stated that the introduction of sound systems in Britain created a shift in the "control of the means of production," referring to the development of a new, "do-it-yourself" (DIY) musical culture among black Britons. While black migrants were not readily accepted in general spaces of leisure and entertainment in postwar Britain, they were able to create alternative spaces of socializing through the advent of sound systems. To this end, Bradley shared with me that the arrival of sound systems in Britain meant,

> We can bust these dances now. We can set up social events that don't involve a band that you gotta pay for and what-not . . . but can be very modern, you know, jazz music, r&b music. And we can set it up anywhere we liked. We don't have to go to an established dance, which was probably going to kick us out anyway. Sound systems—blues dances in people's houses, in the schools, and this sort of stuff—just popped up all over the place and suddenly, because it was Jamaicans controlling sound systems, they controlled the social scene all of a sudden . . . To a degree, they continued to do that. So that was clearly what happened and naturally this happened in the carnival around the '70s. And suddenly it went from being this sort of tiny event and went something to, essentially, small island people of a generation above mine, to something that we could all take part in, we could all have fun with (Bradley 2015).

Bradley's insights help to illustrate an important cultural shift in the carnival scene by the mid-1970s, as it gravitated from being a mostly Trinidadian-dominated event toward becoming a more pan-Caribbean, black intercultural festival. So, whereas the first decade of the carnival featured primarily calypso music and steelband performances, it would later give way to the proliferation of ska bands, as well as the playing of soul, funk, and reggae music on sound systems throughout the carnival grounds. According to Michael La Rose, an activist, former DJ, bandleader, and carnival historian of Trinidadian heritage, these cultural changes in the carnival helped to reinforce a sense of a unity among the different black ethnic groups in Britain,

materially and ideologically. In an interview I conducted with La Rose in 2015, he stated the following to me:

> The issue for my generation was black identity, dealing with the racism in the police force, dealing with the racism in the educational system, and all the other institutions of Britain. So we turned inward on ourselves and we said forget British culture and white British culture, we looked at ourselves. And one of the strongest influences at that time was the reggae music because it was talking about black pride and that kind of thing. But also, because of my background, I knew that calypso did that, kaiso did that. We had a Black Power revolution in Trinidad in the 1970s, so there's all kinds of references to resistance and identity I found within that carnival culture as well as the culture I met in London, which is the reggae/Jamaican culture. So, one of the big impacts that carnival had on me was of what a powerful thing this was, how great it was that we—that is Caribbean people/black people—had organized this thing which was so spectacular, so creative, so musical, so artistic; and secondly, attracted and unified the whole black population. Lots of people from all over the country came: black people, young black people. All kinds of people from the different communities came just to see that we created this thing (La Rose 2015).

From these insights, we can see that the 1970s carnivals became ground zero for presenting a range of black cultural expressions to the masses, as carnival became increasingly more inclusive, more diverse, and more intercultural. Consequently, the aforementioned structural changes to the production of carnival, boosts in public promotion of the event, and musical additions to carnival collectively led to a surge in attendance among revelers from across the city and country, and established the Notting Hill Carnival as one of Britain's most-attended events, with a quarter million people regularly descending upon Notting Hill for the outdoor street festival as early as 1975.

By 1975, the NHC had been established as one of Britain's largest cultural celebrations due particularly to the surge of black youth who came out that year en masse, making NHC 1975 the most attended London carnival to date at the time. The swell in crowd size also led to an increase in the amount of complaints concerning carnival among local residents, most of which came from white residents, and recommendations were made by the deputy leader of the Kensington and Chelsea Council to either ban the 1976 carnival, have it removed from the area,

or regulate it by increasing police presence. The reason provided for the recommendation is that they suspected that there would be a great deal of trouble at NHC 1976 (i.e., NHC was now seen as a threat to public order). As carnival historian Michael La Rose shared with me in our 2015 interview, the reason why carnival was, and continues to be, seen as a "danger" in his view is because "it's mainly the oppressed and the dispossessed and the unemployed who push it, and they control the streets and it's very uneasy" (La Rose 2015). Thus, in conjunction with the movement of the local council against carnival following NHC 1975, the London Metropolitan police force began to patrol the carnival far more aggressively than in previous years. In 1975, there were maybe around 60 police officers on hand working carnival. For NHC 1976, the number of police officers on-duty at carnival was about 1500 (Cohen 1993).

Attempts at "regulating" the NHC by increasing police presence had the residual effect of transforming the festival into a new battleground, where the everyday antagonistic relationship between the police and black youth has been displayed.[14] One of the most extreme examples of growing tensions between the police and black youth occurred during the Notting Hill Carnival Riots of 1976, a standoff between the police and carnivalists that resulted in the hospitalization of nearly 60 carnival attendees, 100 police officers, and the arrest of more than 60 people.[15] Moreover, because of the 1976 riots, NHC continues to have an extraordinarily high police presence, and there are groups who persistently advocate ridding the city/area of carnival completely. The push to ban or relocate carnival has also been compounded by sensationalists reports from conservative British media outlets regarding NHC's alleged "high crime rates,"

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[14] In an interview with carnival historian Michael La Rose (Sept 2, 2015), I was informed that police presence at carnival shifted from about 60 police in 1975 to 1200 in 1976.

[15] Additional information regarding the 1976 Notting Hill Carnival Riot can be found at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/london/5275542.stm.

which consequently reinforce stereotypes of black criminality.[16] In response to these attempts by the local council, the police, and mainstream media to undermine NHC, the then chair of the Carnival Development Committee (CDC) Darcus Howe, along with other Race Today Collective editors produced *The Road Make to Walk Carnival Day: the Battle for a West Indian Carnival in Britain* (1977), a book which declared the right of black carnivalists to the Notting Hill space. Every year that has followed since NHC 1976, carnival leaders have had to continue to have to fight vehemently to keep the carnival on the streets of Notting Hill and to counter misrepresentations of NHC in the media.

During the 1980s, Britain entered the Thatcher era, and with it came a neoliberal political agenda that not only exacerbated Britain's ongoing national identity crisis, but also provided the institutional framework for the deregulation of the British economy; these had a profound impact on social relations, divisions of labor, and welfare provisions in the country. In "Digging for Britain," cultural theorist Dick Hebdige notes how the Thatcher years were a project of "regressive modernization," one where there was a "particular investment in a set of images and myths designed to 'put the 'Great' back into Great Britain again" (a 1980s Tory Party campaign slogan), in addition to selective appropriations of Victorian entrepreneurial values to represent contemporary British national "heritage." According to Hebdige, these were propagated to undermine postwar consensus politics, welfarism, and 1960s libertarianism, opening up several British institutions to free market forces, including the local government, health services, and education (Hebdige 1996:121). Thus, in her efforts to reform the British economy, Prime Minister Thatcher ultimately moved away from policies that supported the postwar social

[16] For more information about linkages between postwar black immigration to the UK, its media coverage, British racisms, and policing black British communities and cultural activities/events, see Hall et al. 1978, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982, and Gutzmore 2000.

democratic state in favor of individualism, private property, personal responsibility, and family values, while also encouraging foreign competition and foreign investments through massive deregulation. This effectively led to lower wages for working-class Britons, weakened labor union power, and drastically accelerated the rate of unemployment in the UK—between 1979 and 1986, unemployment rose from 1.5M to over 3M under the Thatcher-led Conservative Government.[17] Moreover, these policies disproportionately affected Britain's most vulnerable populations: the black working-class.

Under these sweeping changes in the political economy of Britain in the 1980s, a new battle emerged for NHC as a result of coercion and manipulation by the State, as well as internal rifts that were developing within the carnival community. On one hand were groups advocating that the NHC was an artistic endeavor with political significance for Britain's black and Caribbean communities; on the other were groups that understood carnival as a cultural movement, but nonetheless wanted to expand the NHC to explore its commercial possibilities. Thus, as the Notting Hill neighborhood itself was beginning to become increasingly more gentrified, the battle for NHC transitioned from being simply for control of the streets to control of who makes the money at carnival.

By this time, the Arts Council of England began to fund masquerade bands and the carnival itself. In 1981, the Home Office and the Community Relations Committee helped to form a new leadership committee for carnival to rival the CDC, the Carnival Arts Committee (CAC). All of the funds and sponsorships then gravitated to the newly constructed CAC, leading to the eventual phasing out of the CDC (the entity that fought to keep carnival in Notting Hill during the 70s). Under the direction of the CAC, particularly chairman Alex Pascal (1984-1989),

[17] "The Thatcher Years in Statistics": http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-22070491

the new carnival committee shifted from operating as a grassroots entity to becoming fully institutionalized and coopted by the State. During the 1980s, the CAC received its first permanent office and a salaried administrative officer. The Metropolitan Police began to publicly support carnival and the CAC for the first time. The committee also began receiving letters of praise from high-ranking dignitaries and officials, ranging from Caribbean High Commissioners to the Prime Minister and Prince Charles. Some of the NHC organizers and artists were even being invited to private parties in Buckingham Palace (Cohen 1993). By the end of the decade, the NHC had undergone many additional structural changes: the CAC encouraged the founding of the British Association of Static Sound Systems to regulate the operation of stationary sound systems at NHC (1986); the committee worked with the police to fix the parade routes, stewards were assigned to accompany every masquerade band, official judges were appointed for carnival prizes, and carnival stallholders were required to pay a registration fee to the local council in order to trade during the NHC.

In 1989, Claire Holder became the chair of the CAC, and as NHC crowd sizes swelled from hundreds of thousands of attendees to millions, carnival began to garner the attention and sponsorship of corporate enterprises. In doing so, NHC underwent a dramatic phase of commercialization during the 1990s. This phase of commercialization also coincided with the rise of institutionalized multiculturalism in Britain, which attempted to incorporate people minoritized on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, class, and disability into the British public sphere (education curriculum, public media, political representation, etc.).

Under Holder's leadership, the CAC was dissolved into the Carnival Enterprise Committee (CEC), and several affiliated organizations would form: the British Association of Steelbands, the Association of British Calypsonians (1992), and the Caribbean Music

Association (1993) among them. Additionally, Holder promised to attract big businesses to the carnival sphere, and in 1995, NHC was sponsored by its first multinational corporation (Coca-Cola) under their Lilt soda brand and even briefly changed the name to the "Lilt Notting Hill Carnival." NHC also gained sponsorship from Orangina (another soda brand), Western Union, and Virgin during this period as well. By and large, the local economic base that had sustained NHC since its inception was being squeezed out by these changes, as large corporations were allowed full reign and control of the festival. While carnival was becoming a globally-recognized brand in its own right as a result of its commercialization, the organizers and producers of carnival (the masquerade bands, designers, DJs, musicians, etc.) were not the financial benefactors of this new surplus of revenue that carnival was generating; commercialization benefitted the corporations and the local council. The precedent set by these commercial ventures at NHC in the 1990s continued into the 21st century.

By 2002, the NHC had become such a huge enterprise that the London Development Agency commissioned a study to review the economic impact of carnival. According to the research findings, the economic value of the 2002 NHC was estimated to be nearly £93M (roughly $130.5M USD) for its financial contributions to the local and regional economy.[18] This value estimation factored in jobs created specifically for carnival, public transportation usage into the carnival grounds, registration fees, the increase in earnings from local shops that remained open during carnival, and money spent on merchandise, food, and drink at licensed stalls, among other things. Under the direction of its current organizing entity, the London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprises Trust (LNHCET), the NHC has continued to grow and its

[18] For more details, see the issued report titled "The Economic Impact of the Notting Hill Carnival." http://tfconsultancy.co.uk/reports/nottinghillcarnival.pdf

economic value is now believed to have increased to over £100M. Though it was suspected that the carnival was generating huge sums of money as early as the mid-1980s, the results of the 2002 study has undoubtedly served as a critical tool in the fight to keep carnival in London and on the streets of Notting Hill. Perhaps more importantly than having established itself as a financially lucrative event, the NHC has cemented itself as a staple event of Britain's festival culture and London's rich diversity, while also highlighting the various contributions of black/Caribbean people and culture to British society (Figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1 – Image of a costumed NHC masquerader is presented on the bottom right corner on page 29 of the most recently released issue of the official British Passport, circa 2015.

In 2016, NHC celebrated its 50th year anniversary on the streets of Notting Hill. In grand jubilee fashion, 70 masquerade bands took to the road to celebrate this immense achievement. While many bands put on excellent exhibitions, there was one masquerade band that stood "Moko Jumbie high" above all the others; that band was Mahogany, who not only encapsulated the gravest issue of the year that Britons faced in 2016 (the political moment of Brexit and its aftermath), but also highlighted the remarkable significance of *migrant* culture to Britain as part

of their carnival presentation.[19] Their NHC 2016 exhibition was titled, "London is the Place for Me," for which they won first place in the "modern/contemporary" category for carnival masquerade. Inspired by the calypso lyrics sung by Lord Kitchener after the *Windrush* brought nearly 500 Caribbeans to London in 1948, Mahogany chose to pay tribute to the positive impact migrant culture has had on Britain, even while the "immigration question" continues to be a tumultuous political subject in the UK. Mahogany's NHC 2016 presentation situated migrants and migrant culture as essential to the contemporary British experience, not peripheral to it. Examples of this can be seen in several of their masquerade sections, including "Diversity" (consisting of a British flag and new British passport that has a carnival costume character printed in it); "All the Queen's Roses" (the English Rose is the national flower of the UK, and Mahogany posits migrants as the "new English roses of today" that bring color, character, and life to Britain); and "Tube" (referring to the iconic Underground train and world-class transportation system in London, which many Caribbean Britons have been employees of London Transport since the 1950s). Through their presentation and homage to those migrant pioneers who came from the Caribbean and made London their home, Mahogany's 2016 masquerade exhibition underscores the social, cultural, and political transformation that has swept across Britain in the postwar era and has radically reshaped the future of the nation for generations to come in the process.

CONCLUSIONS

Scholarship on postwar Caribbean migration and resettlement has shown that issues of identity and cultural legitimacy have been major concerns for Caribbean migrant communities in

[19] Mahogany Mas Band is led by Clary Salandy and David Ramdeen. In introducing Salandy to the International Steelpan Conference attendees in 2016, Ansel Wong described her skill and expertise as being "Moko Jumbie higher" than everyone else's.

their respective host countries (Gates 1976; Foner 1998; Manuel 2006). According to ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel, "the starting point for these issues is the immediate reality of the forsaken homeland and the difficult and often hostile new urban environment." However, as Manuel notes, Caribbean immigrants throughout the diaspora would "transcend sentiments of despair and loss, embrace their new homeland, and *assert the legitimacy of their own culture therein*" (emphasis added, Manuel 2006:284). In the context of the UK, this was certainly the case among the "Windrush Generation" of Caribbean migrants and their descendants who found themselves at the center of several of Britain's colonial, imperial, and national conflicts.

The aftermath of WWII and British war efforts left the nation reeling at home and abroad. Britain's position as a global superpower was faltering, while, at the same time, anti-colonial and independence movements were rapidly spreading throughout its empire, leading to the widespread decolonization of several overseas British territories over the next few decades. Domestically, Britain was also in the midst of a massive economic recession, and this led to the recruitment of cheap labor from within the empire to provide a needed boost to postwar economic recovery efforts. A major consequence of the recruitment efforts was the large-scale immigration and resettlement of Caribbean, Asian, and African peoples in Britain, with the majority of postwar migrants of color settling in the nation's capital.

Within this context, Chapter 1 interrogated the paradox of Britain's immigrant question and situation in the post-WWII era through an historical overview of black immigration and resettlement in the UK among Britons of Caribbean heritage. It highlighted the contradictory experiences of Caribbean migrants as they transitioned from a status of colonial subjects of the empire to British citizens post-migration, while also revealing the contributions of migrant labor to the rebuilding of British society in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Rebuilding Britain also extended beyond migrant labor, as migrant culture has greatly influenced the transformation of "Old Britain" from the pre-war period, into the new, multicultural/ethnic/racial Britain of the postwar era. This has not been an unopposed (nor peaceful) transformation, as nostalgia for the Britain of old and the alleged threat of ethnic diversity in the UK displacing a sense of common culture and national identity have resulted in persistent social and political contestations concerning the impacts of Caribbean, African, and Asian settlement on contemporary British society.

Despite facing extreme hostility and widespread socio-political marginalization, UK migrant populations of color have asserted the particularity of their traditions and cultural practices within (and against) the dominant society, and have penetrated almost every sector of British social life in the process, from foodways and fashion, to music, sport, and entertainment. Thus, the chapter concludes by linking postwar immigration, and the continued struggle for visibility, recognition, and representation among ethnic minority migrant populations, to contemporary British popular culture. This was done by exploring how, in the midst of rampant anti-black racism and xenophobia in the postwar era, London-based Caribbean migrants were able to mobilize their *marginality* into cultural forms of black empowerment, as evidenced by the emergence of a powerful carnival movement which has since been converted into significant forms of economic, cultural, and socio-political value. I illustrate this more fully in the various chapters that follow, beginning with an ethnographic analysis of the contemporary NHC, which I frame as a social space of value.

Emphasis in Chapter 2 will be on the spatial production of the NHC street festival in order to discuss the particular shape the street festival takes today, and highlight the specific activities and art forms that are exhibited during the festival, in space and time, which gives the

festival many of its distinguishing features. Following this, I provide insights into how meaning and signification is made among NHC attendees, stakeholders, sponsors, and culture producers through the annual production of the street festival in Chapter 3. Collectively, Chapters 2 and 3 elucidates the complex dynamics involved in the production of space (the NHC street festival), and the distinct ways that people attribute particular kinds of value and meaning to the festival and activities that transpire within the space.

TWO

"BACCHANAL" IN THE BRITISH CAPITAL: THE NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL AS A SOCIAL SPACE OF VALUE

> For those of us resident in Britain, the Notting Hill Carnival is our living link with this ancestral history, our chief means of keeping in touch with the ghosts of "back home." In a society which constantly threatens or diminishes black efforts, carnival has become an occasion for self-assertion, for striking back . . . We take over the drab streets and infuse them with our colours . . . We regroup our scattered black communities from Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, and all over the kingdom to one spot in London: a coming together of proud celebration.
>
> We also pull in crowds of native whites, Europeans, Japanese, Arabs, to witness and participate in our entertainment, bringing alien peoples together in a swamp or community of festivity. Carnival breaks down barriers of colour, race, nationality, age, and gender (Dabydeen 1988:40).



Figure 2.1 – Ladbroke Grove one week **before** NHC 2015



Figure 2.2 – Ladbroke Grove **during** NHC 2015

On Carnival Sunday and Monday of the summer Bank Holiday weekend in London, a seemingly unending sea of people can be found densely packed within several neighborhoods in West Central London, from Harrow Road in the North and Shepherd's Bush in the West to Queensway in the East and Notting Hill in the South (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). The crowd size is estimated to be somewhere between one and two million people. Within this crowd are people from various cultural backgrounds and ethnicities, representing different social classes and age groups, children and adults. They have come from near and far. Some are Londoners and Southern Englanders. Others have traveled from the Midlands, Northern England, Wales, and

Scotland. Still others have made an even longer trek to London from overseas.

Adding to the congestion of carnival attendees are traffic/parade stewards in bright neon jackets, security detail for every masquerade band, and thousands of policemen and women on hand, patrolling the area (Figure 2.3). They march in teams of ten or more through the streets and have posts along the carnival parade route and other designated areas of NHC. Police tower booths and surveillance cameras are set up in select locations. There are also a number of police vans on site, as well as police helicopters hovering overhead, surveilling the carnival with a birds' eye view. Additionally, over a hundred licensed vehicles (trucks, vans, and buses) are rented to accommodate revelers on the processional route, many of them displaying banners with the logos of different corporate sponsors imprinted on them (Figure 2.4).



Figure 2.3 – Police detail at NHC



Figure 2.4 – NHC masquerade band sponsored by British Airways

During carnival, graffiti-covered boards plaster beautiful Victorian-styled homes, local shops, and businesses, shielding the buildings from the crowds (Figure 2.5). Perched on the balconies of several of these homes, or "ivory towers" as some of my informants call them, is an additional audience taking in the sights and sounds of carnival from a "safe" distance. With the parade beneath them, they host their own private parties from above, allowing them to get as close to the action as possible without having to deal with crowd interference (Figure 2.6).

Unlike the buildings in Notting Hill and the surrounding areas, which are generally protected with boards and gates, the streets do not fare as well; they are visibly marked with splotches of colorful paint and powder, as well as all manner of trash and rubbish left behind by festival attendees.



Figure 2.5 – Boarded up businesses at NHC



Figure 2.6 – Local residents hosting private party at NHC, top right

Over these two days, the various national flags of the Caribbean—Trinidadian, Barbadian, Jamaican, Grenadian, and others—are flown proudly. Everywhere you turn, you see people displaying their distinctive Caribbean flags, wearing their island colors as part of their clothing ensemble, or accessorizing with Caribbean-themed T-shirts, wristbands, whistles, etc. (Figure 2.7). Additionally, Caribbean food and drink are served in abundance: Jamaican jerk chicken, Trinidadian roti, and Bajan souse . . . Red Stripe, Banks beer, Appleton, Mount Gay, and various rum punches. All of these selections and more can be found within NHC at food and beverage stalls (Figure 2.8).



Figure 2.7 – NHC attendees donning Barbadian paraphernalia



Figure 2.8 – Jamaican food stall at NHC

Extremely high volumes of music can be heard coming from every which direction of the festival grounds . . . Soca and reggae. Funky house and afrobeats. Grime and dubstep. Crowds flock to these various sound sources to sing, dance, and enjoy the music. And at the center of all the festivities and merry-making is a pageantry of masqueraders parading in the streets. Thousands are covered from head-to-toe in body paint, powder, chocolate, mud, and oil in the J'ouvert-style celebration of playing "dutty mas" [dirty masquerade] (Figure 2.9). Others are donning T-shirts designed stylistically to resemble the theme of their particular masquerade band. The grandest of them all, however, are adorned with feathers, beads, sequins, rhinestones, glitter, and other decorative materials, dazzling the crowds with their costumes, gestures, and shenanigans (Figure 2.10). And oh, do the masqueraders dance and have a good time regardless of weather conditions! Rain or shine, these carnivalists assemble behind huge speaker cabinets loaded onto mobile sound trucks and "play mas." Some engage in choreographed dances and synchronized patterns of movement that are intended to highlight the particularities of their masquerade theme, while others simply free-style, or what is generally regarded as "playing yuhself" [yourself]: they jump and wave, whine their waistline [pelvic dance centered on rotating and thrusting hip movements], and chip down the road to the tunes of sweet, sweet soca music. And the drinks, oh gosh! The drinks on the road flow from sun up to sun down. These two days are unlike any other during the year, as the wealthiest borough in the whole of the UK, the Royal

Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, is transformed into pure bacchanal.



Figure 2.9 – Carnivalists playing "dutty mas" at NHC 2016



Figure 2.10 – Bacchanalia "Siren" costume at NHC 2016

While the social and political history of NHC and the development of London's carnival arts scene were discussed in detail in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 is a spatial ethnography of the contemporary NHC street festival. Throughout this chapter, I foreground the cultural context of NHC in an attempt to illustrate the complexities of the festival and its various spaces: the structure, form, organization, material content, and execution of NHC. My ethnography is based on four years of participant-observation at the street festival (2013, 2015, 2016, and 2017), where I not only discuss the production of the NHC space, but also show the various ways that people interact with each other, and use and experience the space sensorially (what one sees, hears, and feels at carnival). By combining ethnographic descriptions of NHC with my analyses of the street festival, I produce an in-depth view of the complexities of social life, cultural practices, and material goods that intertwine at carnival and give NHC its particular shape, character, and even reputation.

Finally, I illustrate the importance of music and sound at NHC to the structuring logic of the festival and the mediation of socio-spatial relations within the festival grounds, bridging the material, corporeal, affective, and social realms together. In this way, the NHC festival space can

also be seen as what ethnomusicologist Josh Kun describes as an "audiotopia," a unique contact zone "where disparate identity-formations, cultures, *and* geographies historically kept and mapped separately are allowed to interact with each other as well as enter into relationships whose consequences for cultural identification are never predetermined" (original emphasis, Kun 2005:23). In the NHC festival space, the cultural expressions of black and ethnic minority groups that have either been historically suppressed in Britain or considered to be peripheral to conceptions of modern "Britishness," become publically visible and audible in extraordinary ways. Simultaneously, the NHC also facilitates an array of social interactions and relations between disparate groups that may not normally exist or happen outside of the context of the street festival. As a space that celebrates cultural differences, and promotes unity and togetherness across those differences, the NHC street festival has come to be regarded as a significant event in Britain of great import: a social space of value. This will be illustrated in the remainder of the chapter, as well as in Chapter 3.

THE NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL STREET FESTIVAL SPACE

On Sunday, August 25, 2013, I traveled from southeast London to Notting Hill for my first ever carnival experience. While carnival conjures up certain kinds of representations in one's imagination (especially images of masquerading women, as they dominate iconographies of carnival), I had absolutely no idea what to expect on the ground. I didn't know exactly what I would see and hear, or how I would even navigate the carnival space. I also had no idea of just how dense the NHC crowd would be, nor if I'd recognize a single familiar face at carnival.

Getting to NHC was simple enough because I was already familiar with the route. Between August 9th and 23rd, I attended the London Calypso Tent, which takes place at the Tabernacle and happens to be within the parameters of the NHC festival grounds. That gave me a

general sense of the lay of the land. But Carnival Sunday 2013 was dramatically different than my previous visits to Notting Hill, and I realized it as soon as I stepped off the London Underground at Westbourne Park Station. First of all, I was immediately engulfed in the sound of loud music when the train doors opened. As I exited the train, my ears and body were vibrating from the music being emitted from various sound systems. The music was largely indistinguishable from that distance though. Secondly, I noticed that the normal exit was not in use for those coming into the carnival grounds. On any other day of the year, you'd typically have to exit Westbourne Park tube station by going up the stairs to the street level, which leads you to Great Western Road. During carnival, the "normal" exit was blocked for carnival attendees entering the festival grounds and another passageway, which is typically restricted access throughout the year, was opened at the platform level as the new primary exit. The new exit led carnival attendees from the train to Tavistock Crescent instead of the usual Great Western Road. Thirdly, I saw new signage posted at the station, which was not there prior to carnival. For example, there was an NHC sign posted for directing traffic from the train platform into the carnival grounds. It pointed to the way out, as well as provided information regarding re-entry to the station, which could be accessed via Great Western Road only. Once I exited the train, I saw another sign that pointed out the route for pedestrian access to carnival. The final thing I noticed that was different is that there were now waist-height steel fences placed alongside several streets as a barrier to prevent pedestrian interference with certain parts of the parade procession.

After getting my bearings with the structural changes in the area, I walked up Aldridge Road taking in some initial sights and sounds. One of the first things that caught my attention on this street was a woman playing music from a speaker system in the front yard of a house. It was labeled "Carnival's Smallest Sound System" (Figure 2.11). From what I could gather, it did not

appear that she was affiliated with any of the official organizations of carnival. Instead, she was using her residence and prime location as a means to contribute to the festive atmosphere.



Figure 2.11 – "Smallest Sound System" at NHC 2013

After snapping a few shots with my camera, I continued down Aldridge Road until I came to a neon sign that read, "Carnival," with an arrow pointed left. So I made a left as the sign directed onto Westbourne Park Road. Once there, I found a plethora of food stalls on the opposite side of the street. These included Refill Jerk Centre, Deli Jerk Centre, Roti Hut, and several others. When I arrived at the intersection of Westbourne Park Road and Great Western Road, I stopped to observe the parade procession. I situated myself at the very front of the crowd, just behind the barrier, at the very center of where the road intersects. After securing my space, I began to document as much of the festival as I could. This location proved to be a "good" spot for capturing aspects of the carnival, especially the parade. Because of my location (situated at the exact point of where the road bends), I was able to take photos and videos of masqueraders head-on as they progressed down the road toward the crowd, as well as when they turned to continue up the next street. I would eventually learn that the location that I secured to document Carnival Sunday was directly across the street from what is regarded as "Trini Hill," an area where people of Trinidadian heritage cluster together in celebration during carnival.

The masquerade presentations I saw at my first carnival fascinated me to no end.

Towering over a huge, red double decker bus, I saw a "Moko Jumbie" floating through the streets in one of the bands (Figure 2.12). As practiced in the Caribbean, Moko Jumbies are typically stilt walkers looming over the crowd, representative of ghosts or spirits that protect the villages. In this London carnival version, however, the Moko Jumbie was not a stilt walker; instead, it was attached to the back of a masquerader's costume and stretched about 15 feet into the sky.



Figure 2.12 – Moko Jumbie at NHC 2013, top right

While most masquerade bands I saw did free-styled dance movements to soca songs, there were a few bands I witnessed whose members performed synchronized routines in the streets, such as "palancing."[20] "Palancing" is a synchronized dance routine that entails jumping up and down, then floating left and right per the instructions of the soca song titled "Palance." In contrast to the brilliantly costumed masqueraders on the road were thousands of carnivalists who were completely covered in paint and powder playing "dutty mas." In one group, some of the band members stopped and posed for the cameras, deliberately engaging the audience, while most simply carried on as if there was no audience at all (or in spite of the crowd). Men were dancing with women, their bodies pressed together buttocks to pelvis (and sometimes pelvis to pelvis).

[20] Palancing is a dance routine that is performed to the 2010 soca hit "Palance" by JW & Blaze.

Women also danced with other women in the same fashion, and all went down as if they had not a care in the world. A few band members even danced with police officers that were standing nearby, while some crowd members fell victim to splashes of paint and powder, particularly those positioned closest to the j'ouvert masquerade band. As the band turned the corner near "Trini Hill," the DJ played a different tune that completely changed the demeanor of the masqueraders: "Posse!", the soca artist Alison Hinds sings out on the track. "Let me see yah raise yah hands / put them in the air / And put them in the air." As the intro played, many of the band members began to wave their various Caribbean flags through the air, displaying the rich diversity of island representations within the band. The intro then repeated. "Posse! / Let me see yah raise yah hands / Put them in the air / And put them in them air." Commanding the crowd to action with her words as the music begins shifting to the chorus, Hinds sings "now jump, jump, jump, jump!" / "Jump and let them see / love and unity / one big family / Togetherness!"[21] And just like that, the entire band was now bouncing and singing along to the track, word for word in complete unison.

On Day Two of NHC 2013 (Monday, August 26th), I spent the entire day with several new acquaintances I met in London about a month and half before carnival. We were primarily in two locations, King Tubby's Sound System on Clydesdale Road and "Bajan Corner." Bajan Corner is located outside of the Elgin Pub at the intersection of Elgin Mews and Ladbroke Grove, and is one of several "island corners" that exists within the NHC. I use the term "island corner" to refer to the clustering phenomenon among the various Caribbean island groups at specific locations along the procession route. The clustering has resulted in the claiming and naming of territory at carnival, with the more prominent ones being "Trini Hill" (representing

[21] "Togetherness" is a 2011 hit soca tune recorded by Barbadian artist Alison Hinds.

Trinidad and Tobago), "Bajan Corner" (representing Barbados), and Grenada Corner (representing the island of Grenada).[22] These claimed spaces are not necessarily fixed or exclusive to members of a specific island group alone. In almost all cases, these areas are occupied by those of a specific Caribbean heritage, as well as those who are not, but it is the clustering of those of a specific Caribbean heritage that gives the corner its distinctive visual and sonic character. This space-creation is typically done by displaying a specific Caribbean national flag on a nearby signpost or landmark, in conjunction with the clustering of people donning cultural paraphernalia associated with a particular island.

When my friends and I arrived to NHC on Carnival Monday, we were planning to simply hang out at Bajan Corner. However, the corner was virtually empty when we arrived around noon. There were only patches of people here and there, and nothing really exciting going on just yet. As a result, we ended up going to a sound system to burn some time until others arrived, and King Tubby's just happened to be nearby. So that's where we decided to go.

King Tubby's Sound System was founded in March of 1970 by Cecil Rennie and is recognized today as one of the UK's pioneering sounds with over 40 years of experience. The system is named after the legendary "Dub Master" Osbourne Ruddock (aka King Tubby) whose innovative techniques not only revolutionized dub reggae music in Jamaica in the 1960s and 70s, but also paved the way for the development of new music genres that foreground bass, drums, and dramatic manipulations of equalization and filtering (e.g., jungle, drum 'n' bass, and dubstep).

When we first arrived at King Tubby's, it was not very crowded yet, so we staked our

[22] "Trini Hill" is located within the Brunel Estates, near the intersection of Aldridge Road and Westbourne Park Road. "Grenada Corner" is located at the intersection of Ladbroke Grove and St. Charles Square.

spot close to the selector platform. In about an hour's time, King Tubby's began to fill up immensely with hundreds of people clustering around the system and even more people passing through the area to get to the carnival parade route. Glancing through the crowd, I noticed that the audience around the system was a mixed group. There were some black and Asian attendees in the crowd, but many of the crowd members were white youth and young adults. For the entirety of our time there, the selector spun a mixture of reggae, dub, and dancehall music.

Around 3pm, we left King Tubby's and headed back to Bajan Corner on Ladbroke Grove. By this time, Bajan corner was bursting with people and the Barbadian national flag was now hanging from a lamppost (Figure 2.13). Several individuals clustering on the corner were wearing Bajan flags draped down their backs like capes, on their heads in the style of a headscarf, or dangling from their neck. Mark Quinton, a South London-based food caterer of Barbadian heritage that was hosting my stay in the UK, was at Bajan Corner and brought food and drink down to NHC to give out to people per usual. A guy by the name of Harvey Dann, who I had recently met a Mark Quinton's "In A Pikkle" food stall a few weeks prior to NHC, was standing on a nearby median with his "Bajan potty" and giving out sips of rum punch to people as they passed by (Figure 2.14). I would later learn that this was Harvey's particular NHC ritual. And when DJ Martin Jay's masquerade band arrived at Bajan corner, he "big upped" Barbados (gave praise and acknowledgement to the island and its people) and then played "I Am A Bajan" by Barbadian artist Rupee (2011). In that moment, the entire corner became a single choir and collectively sung out "Barbados is my home / No matter where I'm roam / Gem of the Caribbean Sea / want nothing with we / I am a Bajan, I'ma Bajan."



Figure 2.13 – "Bajan Corner" at NHC



Figure 2.14 – "Bajan potty" passed to me and Damien at NHC

I spent nearly 12 hours at NHC 2013 across two days, documenting as much of the festival as I could before the battery life in my devices died. I took 370 photos and 25 videos of various aspects of carnival, including signs, food stalls, masquerade presentations, mobile sound trucks, stationary sound systems, steelbands, police detail, the NHC crowd and shots of individuals, and even trash on the ground. Between 2013 and 2017, I attended every NHC that has taken place with the exception of NHC 2014, and have been a participant-observer of carnival in a multitude of ways over the years. Thus, the orientation of my writing on the NHC occupies various subject positions: 1) primarily as a spectator and tourist (2013); 2) as a food catering assistant for one of the bands on the road for two years (Bacchanalia Mas Band - 2015 and 2016), and 3) as a carnivalists, having played mas with both Island Mas Band and Release D Riddim Mas Band (2017).

During my time at NHC, I witnessed first-hand how the NHC street festival completely transforms West Central London physically, socially, and culturally, in addition to the various ways in which Caribbean/black British culture receives unparalleled amounts of visibility and *audibility* during the festival. These, I argue, contribute mightily to production of the NHC street

festival space and the specific social, material, and musical forms it takes. In order to shed light on the socio-cultural and ecological processes that influence how the carnival festival space is created and used, I endeavor to answer to the following questions in this chapter: What structural and environmental changes occur because of NHC, and how does carnival impact the everyday social life of those who live and work in West Central London? What activities are involved in the production of carnival, and how do they operate within the NHC space? How is NHC similar or related to other festivals/carnivals, and what are its distinguishing characteristics? How is the event organized, structured, and managed? Who creates the cultural content that is exhibited to the public? And lastly, what role does music and sound play in the experience of the NHC? In providing insights into the structural, logistical, and cultural production of NHC, what emerges are the specific ways that the NHC social space is created, used, and coded with meaning and value among those who occupy the space.

The Production of NHC: Spatial (Re)configuration, Organization, and Logistical Planning

> [H]ere we see the polyvalence of social space, its 'reality' at once formal and material. Though a product to be used, to be consumed, it is also a means of production; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it. Thus this means of production, produced as such, cannot be separated either from the productive forces, including technology and knowledge, or from the social division of labour which shapes it, or from the state and the superstructures of society (Lefebvre 1991:85).

During the annual production of the NHC street festival, everyday British social life and norms are temporarily disrupted in West Central London, as public space is taken over and dramatically reconfigured. The streets, which would normally be dominated by cars and city buses, give way to pedestrians, as people rule the streets for two days. Prominent public spaces for shopping and leisure, such as the famous Portobello Market, Portobello Green, Emslie Horniman Pleasance, Tavistock Gardens, and Powis Square become spaces of musical entertainment, with either performance stages or sound systems set up within them. Even

particular residential estates and some local businesses are converted into specialized carnival spaces (see discussion of "Island Corners" on pages 85 and 86).

The tube and bus services in west London are also restructured for the festival as well, while several roads throughout the area are blocked by barricades and on-duty police officers. Some of the key stations in the vicinity of the festival grounds include Ladbroke Grove (closed over Bank Holiday weekend), Latimer Road, Notting Hill Gate, Westbourne Park, Holland Park, and Royal Oak. Several of these become exit only stations while carnival is in operation in order to prevent overcrowding. Additionally, buses cannot enter the carnival zones at all between Sunday and Tuesday morning until the conclusion of the festival, unless they are hired out by masquerade bands. This results in extra services and several diversions along bus routes in the area.

Within these larger structural changes in west London, the formal proceedings of the NHC unfold, of which there are three main entities: 1) a J'ouvert morning procession; 2) the Family Day Children's Parade; and 3) the Grand Finale. These transpire over the course of two days, Sunday and Monday of the summer Bank Holiday weekend. The NHC street festival begins at dawn on Sunday morning with "jouvay" rituals of masquerade and music performance, where early morning carnivalists play "dutty [dirty] mas," covering themselves in chocolate, paint, and powders, as the sound of steel pans, African drumming, blown horns and whistles fill the air. The jouvay procession begins and ends at Canal Way, Ladbroke Grove W14. This is then followed by the official Family Day Children's Parade, which begins at 10am and is considered to be the more "family friendly" outing over the two-day celebration. During this segment, the youth take over the streets in more formalized carnival costumes alongside adult carnivalists playing dutty mas. On Monday, the "Grand Finale" takes place and is organized to specifically

cater to the revelry of adult participants. The main parade starts at Great Western Road, winding its way along Chepstow Road, then on to Westbourne Grove, and finally down Ladbroke Grove. The judging station is located on Great Western Road, just beyond the Westbourne Park tube station. On both days, the festival officially shuts down at 8pm and the music is shut off at 8:30pm.



Figure 2.15 – Map of NHC, *Time Out London* 2016

The primary place for the general public to receive information about the NHC street festival is on the official NHC website.[23] In addition to the website, *Time Out London* also produces a guide to the street festival every year that provides important information for carnival attendees, complete with a map of the NHC festival grounds, travel details for getting to and departing NHC via tube and bus services, parade start and end times, safety information, and

[23] The official website of the Notting Hill Carnival: http://www.thelondonnottinghillcarnival.com/carnival.html.

general checklists for people bringing their children to the festival (Figure 2.15). Since 2015, there has also been an NHC phone app available for download to make pertinent carnival information more accessible to people by being literally at one's fingertip at any given time. Some of its features include a map of the NHC festival grounds, a search bar for typing in specific entries, a tab for weather forecast, and the locations of toilets, street traders, bars, first aid, lost and found, sound systems, and the World Music Stage.

While the basic layout, structure, and proceedings of carnival are made readily available to the general public, there are a number of behind-the-scenes operations that take place to ensure that carnival runs as smoothly as possible every year. This begins with the logistical planning processes of the London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprises Trust (LNHCET). LNHCET is the chief organizing body of the Notting Hill Carnival, consisting of a chairperson, board of trustees, performance arena directors, non-executive directors, and an office manager.

In 2015, I was invited to attend a health and safety meeting within one of LNHCET's sub-committees, the Caribbean Music Association (CMA). CMA is the UK-based collective that oversees the musics of NHC and manages the mobile performance units on the road (truck floats and masquerade bands). At the time of the meeting, Lyndon LaCrette was the chairman of CMA. While at the meeting, I gained invaluable insights into some of the inner-workings of the carnival structure from the perspective of its management teams.

The health and safety meeting took place at Harrow Club on August 13th, two weeks before NHC 2015. The meeting was held from 7:30pm-8:30pm in a tightly packed room of about 100 people, each representing the various NHC masquerade bands and their associated DJs. Presiding over the meeting was Lyndon LaCrette. Also present were representatives from the Metropolitan Police force that serve as masquerade band and traffic steward officers during

carnival—a representative from the fire brigade was supposed to be in attendance as well, but was not able to make the final 2015 meeting.

The meeting began with basic introductions, followed by a report of last year's carnival. Afterwards, the NHC officers made presentations about expectations for the upcoming carnival and took questions from the audience. In her introductory address to the bandleaders and DJs, the lead steward officer stated that her role, along with other officers with the same assignment, was to assist the different carnival bands as they made their way around the carnival route. Their primary concerns are the general safety of band members and controlling congestion along the parade route, especially near the judging point. To be more effective with keeping non-band members from disrupting masqueraders, especially near the judging point, they introduced a wristband system for NHC 2015 for the first time (this system is still in place). The wristbands are given to the bandleaders in advance of carnival, who then give one to every single member of their respective band. Without the wristband, band members cannot participate in the masquerade presentations. The band steward officers also work in tandem with traffic stewards who address any issues that arise with masquerade float trucks or the drivers. Additionally, the band and traffic stewards have a text messaging system in place to share vital information and updates with each other throughout the course of carnival, including a warning message at 8pm about the approaching 8:30pm sound curfew.

Another thing I learned from the meeting is that many masquerade bands and their leadership team have to build their truck floats themselves. While the truck itself comes from a hired company, the flatbed is usually completely bare when the bands receive them. This means they do not have any guardrail support for keeping speakers and other equipment in place while the truck is mobile, no handrails to assist the float management team as they move about the

truck or to protect them from falling off, nor stepping apparatuses for getting on and off the truck, which is necessary throughout the carnival day. Consequently, the CMA team has to build the 40ft truck floats complete with all the necessary safety measures from scratch, from the ground up. The entire truck bed has to be scaffolded with metal beams to ensure the structure is secure enough to support all of the sound equipment. Many bands would then wrap foam around the metal for safety, especially on the sides where people tend to be located—the sides of the truck are where masqueraders go to receive their food and drinks. Additionally, safety caps are oftentimes placed on the sharp edges of the metal beams to provide extra measures of protection, and boards are strategically placed around the sides to prevent things from sliding off the truck.

All of these activities happen outside of the view and knowledge of the general public. While the mobile sound trucks are often seen as mundane components of NHC, they could not function properly without these behind-the-scenes operations. Moreover, risk assessment, liability insurance, and health and safety are just as critical to the integrity of NHC as delivering an enjoyable festival. Therefore, as a standing protocol, all vehicles must be inspected and deemed safe before they are allowed on the road during carnival, and all float truck drivers must pass thorough background checks before they can operate at the festival. These security measures have especially heightened over the past few years as a result of recent truck-involved terrorist attacks across Europe.

The logistical factors that go into producing the NHC, as highlighted from the CMA meeting, provides a window into the struggles to annually create and deliver carnival in a city like London. The NHC doesn't happen on its own, and is never guaranteed to take place. Despite annual uncertainties concerning NHC, the carnival organizing committees and NHC culture producers work around the clock, year after year, to try to put on successful carnivals. And it

takes an incredible amount of effort and teamwork (individually and collectively) to ensure that the festival is as safe as possible and enjoyable for the masses. This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

NHC PERFORMANCE ARENAS

Within the umbrella LNHCET governing entity, there are several sub-committees and organizations that are vital to the production of NHC and its material content. The most salient of these are the organizations that make up the performance arenas of NHC. Today, there are currently five performance arenas associated with the NHC street festival: masquerade, calypso, steel pan, sound systems, and soca music. Each of these are explored individually in this section.



Figure 2.16 – Mahogany Mas Band presentation at NHC 2013

Masquerade is simultaneously a carnival art form, performance, and cultural practice that combine costuming with theatre, drama, sculpture, music, and dance (Figure 2.16). At NHC, masquerade bands that take part in the festival are members of an organization known as the Carnival Arts and Masquerade Foundation, or CAMF. CAMF was founded in 2011 as a result of the merger between the Notting Hill Mas Bands Association and London International Carnival Mas Association. According to the CAMF Members' Handbook, the purpose of the organization is to "represent and promote the activities of Mas bands that take part in the Notting Hill

Carnival by providing them with support, advice, and training, and undertaking strategic projects on behalf of its members in order to promote the traditions of the Caribbean and other regions in the UK" (2015). Support, advice, and training for CAMF members include assistance with carnival preparations, particularly as it relates to carnival registration applications and fees with LNHCET, in addition to providing all of the information they need about the acquisition of vehicles during carnival, securing drivers, and health and safety support documentation. Currently, there are at least 75 different masquerade bands that are members of CAMF, with approximately 60 bands (50,000 performers) taking part in carnival every year.

In the lead up to NHC, every participating mas band develops a theme with different costume sections, and this forms the foundation of their masquerade presentation for the year. Inspiration for themes comes from any and everywhere: fantasy, history, popular culture, humanitarianism, personal experiences, etc. The possibilities are endless. A short list of themes from various masquerade bands at NHC 2017 include "Slither" by Bacchanalia, "Ganges and the Nile" by Funatik Mas Band, "The Spirit of Life" by Karnival Mania, "Tales of Valour" by Release D Riddim, and "Future" by Flagz Carnival Mas Band. After the bandleaders and designers have agreed upon a theme, the various costume sections are created as representative of the theme. Each section is then differentiated by their unique designs, color schemes, and patterns, which also affects the pricing of the costume package.

The recruitment of masqueraders takes place months in advance of the NHC. At specialized promotion events called "costume band launches," masquerade band leaders and their design team advertise their upcoming theme and costumes through fashion show presentations. The costumes are not simply placed on tables or on mannequins for viewing; instead, the bands have female and male models wear their costumes, allowing potential patrons

the opportunity to see what the costumes look like on a human body so that they can envision themselves playing mas with that particular band. In addition to the band launches, masquerade bands also advertise their line of costumes on a variety of social media platforms, namely Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. For those that are unable to attend the band launches and sign-up in person, links to the band's websites are usually featured on their social media pages where payments for costumes can be made via the web.

On Carnival day, masqueraders are entirely under the care of their masquerade band's leadership team and are "promised" a memorable carnival experience. As part of the application process, band leaders provide masqueraders with liability forms to fill out concerning their health and medical conditions. Masqueraders are strongly encouraged by band leaders to bring any and all necessary medication and supplements along with them. In addition to the personal responsibilities of masqueraders concerning their health and safety on the road, the band leaders have other provisions in place as well. For example, a first-aid staff team is available for every band should any masquerader need medical attention. Additionally, masqueraders are provided food and drink on carnival day as part of their package deal, as well as the services of security detail to keep band members safe (Figure 2.17).



Figure 2.17 – Screenshot of a costume package for NHC 2017 by Flagz Mas Band

In every band that I have participated with over the years (Release D Riddim, Island Mas, and Bacchanalia Mas Band), the overwhelming majority of participating masqueraders were women, especially costumed masqueraders. In an interview I conducted with Vincent John, band leader for DUKA Mas Band, he told me that women make up 80-90% of his mas players.[24] While the numerical presence of women in masquerade today greatly outnumbers that of men at carnival, women's masquerade costumes also tend to be far more elaborate and more expensive than men's costumes. Consider the "Supernatural" presentation by Bacchanalia Mas Band for NHC 2016, where they offered eight different costume types for masqueraders. The costume packages they offered were as follows: three options for "Dragons" (Female £450 [frontline] – Female £250 [backline] – Male £225); two options for "Sirens" (Female £475 [frontline] – Female £250 [backline]); and three options for "Valkyries" (Female £475 [frontline] – Female £250 [backline] – Male £225). As can be seen by these figures, the most expensive costumes they offered, the frontline female "Sirens" and "Valkyries" costumes, were £200-£225 more expensive than the backline female costumes, and the cheapest costumes they offered across the board were male costumes.

These figures provide insights into the sacrifice that masqueraders make to participate in carnival, especially considering that NHC is 100% free for non-masqueraders (i.e., general carnival attendees). Not only do masqueraders sacrifice their money, time, and energy in order to be a part of the carnival performance, but they also sacrifice their own personhood (to a certain degree) in order to participate in carnival in this capacity. This sacrifice can be thought of in the way Michael Lambek describes ritual deeds in *The Ethical Condition*, which are "acts in which

[24] The dominance of women in carnival masquerade presentations is not unique to NHC. In the Trinidad Carnival and those of the Caribbean diaspora, women also greatly outnumber men in masquerade.

people submit to something larger than themselves" (2015:207). According to Lambek, "there is no more complete mode of participation in this sense than allowing oneself to be sacrificed," as this mode of participation "exhibits . . . [an] inextricable connection of action and passion" (2015:208). Consequently, on Carnival day, the costumed masquerader is no longer just him or herself, but the realization of a masquerade character and the personification of carnival art. Moreover, it is in the specific spatio-temporal space produced by the NHC street festival that a particular kind of value accrues for masqueraders that can be described as "situational value" (Brian Moeran et al. 2011), where the money spent to purchase their costumes concedes to the experience of playing mas on carnival day.[25] As Michael La Rose shared with me in an interview concerning masquerading at NHC: "There is no experience like dancing in the streets where a car used to roll, to dominate. There is no experience that could replicate that. So if anybody goes to Carnival as a spectator, I would advise them to go to Carnival as a participant and dance in the street because when that happens, the power and the experience is exceptional" (La Rose 2015).



Figure 2.18 – 2016 UK Calypso Monarch "G-String" performing on the World Music Stage at NHC 2016

[25] "Situational value" refers to the value that accrues in an item because of its use in particular situations, which may be temporal or spatial.

Another important and foundational performance arena of NHC is **calypso**, a folk music genre that developed in the Caribbean in the late 19th/early 20th century and is also closely associated with carnival celebrations. Calypso songs feature elements of topical commentary and social analyses as essential components of their musical composition. Within this framework, calypsonians use different communicative devices, such as humor, satire, innuendo, word play, double entendre, and protest, to share their knowledge, observation, or views on various subject matters through artful storytelling. Concerning the history of calypso, ethnomusicologist Jocelyne Guilbault writes that the socio-political and economic conditions of Trinidad spurred the development and evolution of modern-day calypso music beginning in the nineteenth century, whereby pre-independence Trinidad "became historically entangled with calypso" in the midst of ongoing colonial and class struggles for power on the island (Guilbault 2007:21).

During the twentieth century, calypso also became one of the earliest internationally popular music genres, as a result of circulating music recordings, touring calypso musicians, and Caribbean migration patterns to North American and European countries. Consequently, just as calypso became entangled with the historical evolution of pre-independence Trinidad, calypso also become entangled with the history of post-WWII Britain in the aftermath of Caribbean migration to the UK in the 1950s and '60s. In both contexts, Trinidad and Britain, there are also calypso song competitions that take place every year. In the UK, calypso artists from around the country participate in the London Calypso Tent, which runs from the first week of August until Carnival Friday and marks the official beginning of the NHC. The competing artists are all members of a network of musicians known as the Association of British Calypsonians (ABC). A more in-depth discussion on the history of British calypso, ABC, and the London Calypso Tent can be found in Chapter 4.

While the Tent is the official site that showcases British calypso, members of ABC also have the opportunity to share their music with a larger audience at NHC. Through funding from the Arts Council of England and other corporate sponsors, ABC presents and hosts live music performances on the NHC "World Music Stage" (Figure 2.18). The stage is located at Powis Square, just across the street from The Tabernacle where the Calypso Tent takes place. World Music Stage performances are scheduled for both Carnival Sunday and Monday, and typically start around noon each day. Additionally, most of these performances are backed by the ABC All-Stars, the resident band of the Calypso Tent, though some acts perform with pre-recorded backing tracks.

The World Music Stage is more that just the premier stage of calypso music at NHC, however; ABC also invites different local and international guest artists to perform annually on the stage as well. According to the ABC website, one of the objectives of the World Music Stage is to "provide an opening for emerging artists (across the music genres) to introduce their music to an audience who may otherwise miss the opportunity to experience these performances" (http://www.britishcalypsonians.com/world-music-stage.php). Thus, the World Music Stage is not only a promotional opportunity for ABC and the London Calypso Tent to showcase its members, but also an incredible opportunity for artistic development and exposure for up-and-coming British musicians who perform styles of music beyond calypso.



Figure 2.19 – St. Michael and All Angels Steel Orchestra at NHC 2015

In addition to masquerade and calypso, **steel pan** is paramount to NHC and its historical development over the years. The origins of steel pan instruments, and the rise of steelband orchestras and competitions in particular, has its roots in the Caribbean, namely 20th century Trinidad. Steel pan, or simply *pan* as it is now commonly referred, is believed to have developed out of 19th century *tamboo bamboo* music practices in Trinidad after the British banned the playing of drums during carnival in 1883. As an alternative to "drum" playing, tamboo bamboo ensembles would instead beat sticks on bamboo tubes together or stamp them on the ground to create syncopated, percussive sounds. In the early 1900s, these musicians also started to incorporate additional percussive sounds into their ensemble by beating bottles and pieces of available metal (dust pans, spoons, triangles, buckets, etc.).

While the banning of drums during carnival served as one of the catalyst to the eventual development of steel pan in Trinidad, another would be the U.S. military occupation of Trinidad during the Second World, which resulted in thousands of discarded oil drums being left behind on the island. These 55-gallon oil drums were then repurposed by tamboo bamboo musicians and converted into musical instruments by the late 1930s and early 1940s. This was done by denting and burning the heads of the oil drums to create different tones and pitches, enabling these musicians to produce melodies to coincide with their rhythmic arrangements. After WWII, the newly constituted steel pan instruments grew immensely in popularity among the lower working class population in Trinidad, and steelband ensembles and competitions emerged shortly after. Steelbands consist of an ensemble of steel pan drums and a percussion section (typically a drumset, congas, shakers, and scratchers), and the ensemble is organized into particular groupings based on the function and range of the instruments: lead (melody), double second (countermelody and harmony), cello/guitar pan (rhythm chords), and tenor/six bass. The national

steelband competition in Trinidad and Tobago is known as Panorama, and it was originally formed in 1963. By 1992, steel pan was declared the national instrument of T&T.

Steel pan was originally brought to the UK by the Trinidad All-Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO), whose members were individually selected to perform as a collective at the Festival of Britain in 1951. TASPO was also the first steelband to travel abroad to perform for an international audience. Two members of TASPO (Russell Henderson and Sterling Betancourt) went on to form the first steelband group established in the UK in the early 1950s. Henderson and Betancourt also performed at the original Notting Hill Carnival of 1966. Today, UK steelbands that perform at NHC are registered members of the British Association of Steelbands. These include groups such as Ebony Steelband, Mangrove Steelband, Nostalgia Steelband, St. Michaels and All Angels Steel Orchestra, among several others.

In mid-August, UK steelbands put on an event called "Block-o-rama," which showcases the youth in the different bands, as well as their musical repertoire. Most of the tunes that are played at the event consist of arrangements of the latest soca recordings from the Caribbean, calypso standards, well-known reggae songs, and a few Top 40 hits occasionally. The first "Block-o-rama" I attended in 2013 was located in Powis Square. However, it has since been moved to Emslie Horniman Pleasance Park, the site of the UK National Panorama Competition, where eight steelbands battle it out each year on Carnival Saturday to be crowned national steelband champions. Following the competition on Saturday, steelbands take to the streets during carnival on Sunday and Monday (Figure 2.19). They not only participate in the jouvay morning processional, but also perform during both parades, where they are situated on mobile trucks or assembled together within moveable street carts.



Figure 2.20 – Channel One Sound System at NHC 2015

Of all the performance arenas of carnival, static **sound systems** occupy the place of "outlier" of sorts. While the overwhelming majority of the cultural and musical practices at NHC are of Trinidadian or Eastern Caribbean origin, sound systems are the cultural contributions of Jamaica and its overseas community in the UK (Figure 2.20). A sound system refers to both the equipment that produces/emits music and those who operate the system. The components of a sound system include a towering bank of speaker cabinets, one or two turntables, a soundboard and mixer, a "selector" who chooses and plays the music, and a DJ who "toasts/chats/raps" over the music.

The first sounds systems emerged in Jamaica during the 1940s among the lower working-class population who could not afford to be patrons at high-end music venues in downtown Kingston. As a result, they began to use PA systems to create outdoor parties, and over time, they built sound systems that were far more powerful than the generic PA systems in order to have greater command over the crowds. These technological advancements eventually led to the development of a competitive ethos in sound system culture, one that privileged not only having the "heaviest" sound, but also obtaining the rarest and most exclusive music recordings that selectors could find and play.

As sound system culture developed in Jamaica, the UK quickly became fertile ground for its global spreading. Over the next few decades, thousands of sound systems sprang up across

Britain, from London and Birmingham to Manchester and Huddersfield. The first UK-based sound systems were established in Ladbroke Grove (London) by Duke Vin and Count Suckle in 1955. Sound systems in the UK were not just a mere transplant of culture from Jamaica to Britain, however. They also served as a dynamic and interactive medium that brought diverse black migrant groups together, as sound systems were one of few places one could go to not only hear the latest ska, rocksteady, and reggae tunes, but also calypso, jazz, soul, Afrobeat (in the style of Fela Kuti), highlife, and funk as well. Thus, when sound systems were introduced to NHC under the leadership of Leslie Palmer (1973-75), more people were drawn to NHC than just the traditional "carnivalists" of years past who were calypso and steel pan enthusiasts primarily. Today, there are 38 sound systems that play at NHC, and each system is a registered member of the British Association of Sound Systems (BASS).

While sound systems certainly brought different black migrant communities together in postwar Britain, the addition of sound systems into carnival was also a double-edge sword. On one hand, it helped to exponentially grow attendance at NHC. On the other hand, it also created various kinds of tensions during carnival, culturally and logistically. Prior to the introduction of sound systems, steelbands were the dominant source of music-making at carnival and masquerade bands would follow the steelbands along the procession. That began to change by the late 70s/early 80s as sound systems were placed on mobile trucks and masquerade bands began following the mobile sound systems. So in some respects, steelbands began to become phased out at NHC in critical ways. Additionally, sound systems were demanding crowds completely independent of the parade itself, which was arguably the most important component of the early carnivals. A severe consequence of this is that people started to attend carnival with the sole purpose of only hanging out at sound system and completely ignoring the masquerade

presentations, a trend that continues to this day to a large extent. This then bleeds into issues concerning the flow(s) of traffic at carnival as well. Lastly, there is also the issue of competing sound sources at NHC, between live acoustic musics (steelbands, drum troupes, and staged musical acts) and sound systems (static and mobile). Despite these internal divisions, tensions, and conflicts, carnivalists in the different performance arenas have found ways of co-existing over the years through constant compromising and negotiations.



Figure 2.21 – DJ Tate at NHC 2016

The final performance arena of NHC is **soca**, presented at NHC by CMA-affiliated masquerade DJs. Soca is a popular music genre that developed in Trinidad in the 1970s before spreading throughout the Caribbean and beyond. It was pioneered by Ras Shorty I (Garfield Blackman, formerly known as "Lord Shorty") who experimented with calypso by fusing it with elements of East Indian music. These included the incorporation of not only Indian-inspired rhythmic patterns to calypso music, but also Indian percussive instruments such as the *dholak* and *dhantal*. As ethnomusicologist Jocelyne Guilbault notes in *Governing Sound*, the intentions of Ras Shorty I were to inject calypso with new energies (as it was believed to be "dying" out) and to also "unite the Indian and African peoples" (2007:172). He referred to his experimental music as "the soul of calypso" and called it "sokah," which evolved into modern-day "soca" as it

is spelled today.

Though the explicit use of Indian percussive instruments in Ras Shorty I's "sokah" music would soon fade after his 1973 "Indrani" recording and 1974 *The Love Man* album, he continued to incorporate Indian rhythms in his music, which were now being played on the drum set and guitar, alongside the familiar calypso rhythmic patterns. With the blending of rhythmic patterns and changes in musical arrangements, Ras Shorty I's "sokah" began to develop into a unique style of music that was distinct from what was regarded as traditional calypso. And over the next 40 years, soca would continue to undergo drastic musical changes.

By the 1990s, soca had become a dominating force in the carnival music industry, garnering incredible amounts of media exposure on the radio and in the press in Trinidad, in addition to being the most popular music that was played on the road during carnival and in the pre-carnival fetes. This was partly due to changes in soca lyrics, which gravitated away from social commentary, which is prevalent in the art of calypso performance, to emphasizing partying, dancing, and having a good time, each being crucial elements of the festival atmosphere of carnival. Additionally, young people in Trinidad were also listening to dancehall, zouk, and hip hop as well, which had penetrated the global music market and was transforming black youth culture worldwide. Thus, these musical forms would influence the trajectory of soca from the 1990s onwards.

In 1993, the Soca Monarch competitions were created in T&T ushering in a new era for soca music, and the artist "Superblue" was its first title winner. Through his growing popularity in the 90s, Super Blue produced the new model for soca that featured faster tempos (120bpm to 160bpm) and participatory instructions for carnivalists/revelers to jump and wave, wine, pump, "guh dung" (go down), etc. His trademark brand became known as "jump and wave" soca. By

the end of the decade, this fast-paced trend in soca re-invigorated carnival with a new energy, one that was both youth-driven and strategically designed for carnival and feting. Additionally, soca artists also began to incorporate synthesized sound technologies into the music (namely drum machines and samples of popular "riddims") in order to make the music more palatable for the global market.[26] As a result of these musical changes and shifts in music production, soca began to churn out a number of international superstars in the 21st century, with Machel Mantano, Bunji Garlin, Alison Hinds, Fay-Ann Lyons, and Destra being some of the most prominent soca artists in the world today.

In 2005, the Soca Monarch competition was expanded and its format changed—it's now called the International Soca Monarch competition. Instead of uptempo and slower soca songs being judged under the same category in single competition, there are now two separate categories of competition: "Power" Soca Monarch (faster) and "Groovy" Soca Monarch (slower). Another category was also added to the competition called "People's Choice." In addition to the development of new categories for the soca competition, numerous permutations of soca have also emerged as well that reflect the various cultural differences, folk traditions, and aesthetic approaches to music-making from island to island in the Caribbean. Some of these distinctive styles of soca include "chutney soca" (Indo-Trinidad), "ragga soca" (blends dancehall reggae and soca), "Afro-soca" (blends Afrobeats and soca), "bashment soca" (blends bashment dancehall and soca), "bouyon soca" (from Dominica), and "jab jab soca" (from Grenada).

The most prevalent place to hear soca music at the NHC is on or near the parade route among masquerade bands such as Funatik (DJ Martin Jay), Release D Riddim (DJ Credable),

[26] "Riddims" are derived from Jamaican dancehall music practices of incorporating a fixed and prerecorded instrumental track into a new musical work, which can also be used by other artists.

Bacchanalia (DJ Tate), Euphoria (DJ Shep Beats), Flagz (DJ Majikal), and several others. Equipped with laptops, headphones, microphones, turntables, mixers, and large speaker cabinets attached to the flatbed of trucks, NHC masquerade DJs pump the latest and most popular soca tunes from the Caribbean as the soundtrack to their band's street performance, which lasts for several hours (Figure 2.21). In analyzing the soca music played at NHC over the years, I have found that nearly all of the soca played on the parade route is imported from the Caribbean every year, as opposed to the playing of locally-produced soca recordings. This sheds light on the ongoing connections between NHC and the carnival industry in the Caribbean, in addition to dependencies that exists between the Caribbean and its diaspora through the global circulation of cultural goods like soca music recordings.

Despite not gaining as much attention and recognition as Caribbean-based soca artists, there are several UK soca artists that perform at NHC, record music throughout the year, and even compete in local music competitions as well. These artists include Triniboi Joocie (UK Soca Monarch 2013), Nikisha Reyes-Piles (UK Soca Monarch 2014), Soca Johnny, Sunshine and Nadiva (UK Soca Monarch 2016), and Ms. Desire. There are also a couple of Internet radio shows that feature soca music played by UK-based DJs, with the Caribbean Affair by the prolific "UK Prince of Soca" DJ Martin Jay being the most prominent.

Collectively, the five performance arenas of NHC represent the heartbeat of the carnival festival, as they are what people come from around the world to see, to hear, and to experience. Additionally, through the performance arenas, we also see the extent to which objects, bodies, and different kinds of sounds at carnival intersect, and are even interlocked. For example, there is no such thing as a masquerade band without costumes (even if it's just matching T-shirts), and no masquerade band parades on the streets of Notting Hill in silence. That is to say, objects

(costumes, shirts, and props) are essential to masqueraders (bodies) and the performance of masquerading as principle, while music (sound) and musicians are fundamental to the entire carnival experience. Furthermore, when analyzing the five performance arenas of NHC, one finds that four of the arenas (calypso, steel pan, soca, and sound systems) are grounded in music performance or the mediation of music, yet most studies on NHC fail to consider music and musicking at carnival on its own terms. This represents a significant lacuna in studies of NHC, especially considering that carnival organizers, academics, stakeholders, and other NHC practitioners "identified the music as the *most important core value* of the Notting Hill Carnival," as revealed in a 2013 study conducted by Dr. Nicole Ferdinand, a tourist and festival management specialist (2013:19). Considering the centrality of music to NHC, I will explore some of the ways music and sound contributes to the festival structure and atmosphere at NHC for those occupying the shared space.

THE ROLE OF MUSIC AND SOUND AT NHC IN MEDIATING SOCIO-SPATIAL RELATIONS

In his writings on music and sonic practices in New Orleans, ethnomusicologist Matt Sakakeeny writes that "moving *through* space requires an orientation *to* space, and sound is one way people orient themselves to one another and to the environments they cohabit" (original emphasis, 2010:4). Building from Sakakeeny's work, as well as R. Murray Schafer's writings on "soundscapes" (1977) in the following section, I show how music and sound play a vital role in the production of NHC, where they not only give the festival many of its recognizable features as a black, Caribbean, and multicultural British event, but also mediate a range of socio-spatial relations between culture producers and the general public. Both of these, I argue, fundamentally shape how the festival space is organized and how people experience NHC.

The music that is played or performed at the NHC street festival does not include any and all musics. For example, you typically would not hear Billboard Top 40 pop songs at carnival, though some Top 40 recordings have recently crossed-over into the carnival realm (e.g., "Work" by Rihanna and "One Dance" by Drake).[27] Additionally, music that expresses religious intolerance, violence, or contains explicit sexual content are strongly prohibited at NHC. On the whole, the overwhelming majority of the music you hear at NHC can be generally characterized as "black music," featuring a range of musical styles and genres from the Caribbean, Africa, the U.S., and the UK. These include calypso, reggae, ska, dancehall, funky house, jungle, drum 'n' bass, soca, grime, and most recently, Afrobeats from Nigeria and Ghana. The sheer range and volume of black music genres at NHC is not only representative of the eclectic taste in music and performance styles of black London in particular, which has been increasingly adopted by white British youth, but also emblematic of ongoing diasporic cultural production and exchange *in action*. While adequate representations of black people and black culture continue to lag in mainstream British media (TV and radio), NHC operates as an important *black* "audiotopia," where sound, space, and African, Caribbean, and black British identities converge and "[o]ffers the listener[s] and/or the musician[s] new maps for re-imagining the present social world" (Kun 2005:23). In the social world mobilized by NHC, black art forms in Britain are cultivated and black cultural representations are celebrated. Thus, the music at NHC does more than merely entertain the carnival crowds; it serves as amplification black cultural presence in Britain, one that is a bold and unapologetic as it is emitted into public space.

The acoustic environment of carnival, consisting of a multitude of sound sources all

[27] One of the reasons these two songs have currency within the Caribbean carnival circuit is because both are built upon common Jamaican dancehall beats, which has helped the records'global marketability. I also heard these songs while attending the Toronto carnival in 2016.

projecting different music materials at vastly different tempos, frequencies, and intensities, plays an integral role in the spatial organization of NHC and in how one experiences carnival. This is based largely on one's geographical location at carnival in relation to specific performance spaces (e.g., proximity to sound systems, live music stages, drum troupes, the parade route, etc.), as well as one's movement patterns throughout the festival grounds over the course of the day. For example, the processional route is the designated area for masquerade at NHC. If one stands and watches the carnival parade over time, you can certainly differentiate each masquerade band by their costumes, as every band is different. Additionally, each band have their own DJs or set of musicians catering to their group of masqueraders, thus differentiation between bands is also structured through music/sound. Overall, the music that dominates the parade route is soca music unlike in the other performance arenas, and this is one of the ways the parade is distinguishable from other musical spaces at NHC.

The masquerade procession is dynamic and interactive, where people in the proximity of the parade are typically standing, listening, clapping, dancing, and/or singing along to the music. On the processional route, DJs typically have two jobs they must do simultaneously: 1) provide unending "vibes" for the masqueraders in their respective band; and 2) get the crowd involved in the celebration as well. This entails continuous negotiations of what music to play, when to play it, and where along the parade route select tunes are played. One example is selecting the proper songs for the band to "cross the stage" (i.e., pass through the judging point). This is a crucial moment not only because the costumes and band performances are being judged, but also because it is where many of the television broadcasting cameras are located at NHC. So, while the DJ must keep the spirit of the band up throughout the entire day, the masqueraders are expected to reach hype levels when crossing the stage per the selections of the DJ at that crucial

time. An example of this can be seen in 2015, where, when crossing the judging point at NHC 2015, Bacchanelia Mas Band showcased their presentation to three of the biggest soca tunes of the year: "Party Done" by Angela Hunte and Machel Mantano, "No Behaviour (Whole Place Shell Down)" by Cloud 5, and "Like Ah Boss" by Machel Mantano. The latter tune was crowned "Road March" of Trinidad Carnival 2015, just six months prior to the NHC.

Another example of the negotiations DJs make at NHC pertaining to what music to play, and when and where to play certain recordings, can be seen as mobile sound trucks near one of the "island corners" along the NHC processional route, as described earlier in this chapter. At NHC, "island corners" facilitate crucial linkages between location and music, functioning as what R. Murray Schafer calls a "soundmark," a "community sound which is unique or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by people in that community" (Schafer 1977:10). At these select locations, the DJ gets the crowd involved by "big upping" the island on the mic, and then dropping the latest big tunes that have come out recently from that specific island. So when passing Grenada corner, for example, the location becomes a "soundmark" where the knowledgeable Caribbean soca DJ would typically play what is known as "jab jab soca" from Grenada. Some of the unique musical characteristics of this style of soca consist of its thematic material, which oftentimes include cultural references to horned devils in chains playing a Grenadian-style of mas in its lyrics, where they are covered in mud, oil, and black paint, and wreak havoc at carnival for anyone that dare cross their path. Musically, jab jab soca also features a persistent rhythm that is incorporated into many of the songs, which simulates the sound of a tubular end-blown horn (Figure 2.22).[28] Each time I witnessed a band passing through

[28] Examples of the "jab jab rhythm" can be found in a number of popular Grenadian soca tunes, including "Jab Jab" by Iwer George (2014), "Soak It Good" by Skinny Banton (2014), and "Ray Tay Tay" by Mya and Uncle Ellis (2016).

an island corner where the DJ would use the location as a "soundmark," sheer madness ensued, as national pride combined with festive merriment reached peak levels in that particular space and time.



Figure 2.22 – Common rhythm featured in "jab jab soca"

Beyond the processional route, there are also dozens of stationary sound systems scattered throughout the carnival grounds, formal live music stages, and even pop-up performances by street musicians. Most of the stationary sound systems play reggae, dancehall, jungle, drum 'n' bass, and grime musics. On the live music stages, you will hear performances by calypsonians, as well as ska and reggae bands predominately. Sometimes you may also hear a performance by Afro-fusion bands or grime artists as well. Finally, the pop-up street music I've witnessed over the years consists mostly of African percussionists, performances by samba bands, or capoeira groups (Figures 2.23 and 2.24). Together, these entities collectively contribute to the unique spatial configuration of the NHC, vis à vis distinct, territorialized music spaces.



Figure 2.23 – African percussionists at NHC 2016



Figure 2.24 – Brazilian capoeira group at NHC 2016

While these musical spaces are territorialized in various ways, they can, and often do, clash with one another as a result of their close proximity to each other. For example, within a single block of the carnival grounds, there could be three or more different sound sources catering to different carnival crowds. For example, at the corner of Powis Mews and Talbot Rd, there is a sound system (Solution Sound System) that is located about 20 feet away from a live music stage. While standing in-between both music spaces, you can hear bits of them simultaneously, and the closer you more toward one or the other, the clearer the individual sound sources become. Additionally, there is another live performance stage in the same area (the "World Music Stage"), which is about 50 feet from the aforementioned one and caters to its own carnival crowd. I present this microcosm of music spaces along Powis Mews in order to highlight the prevalence of musicking throughout the carnival grounds, first and foremost, but also to suggest that music/sound is so integral to NHC that there are virtually no areas of the festival that are "soundless" or without music.

Of all the performing groups at NHC, carnival DJs have a responsibility that goes beyond simply providing music for the masquerade bands and audiences. All carnival DJs are registered members of CMA, and as such, they have to complete training every year before being allowed to play at carnival. This ensures accountability for musical content that is played, the format in which it is delivered, and an agreement to adhere to safety protocols according to the guidelines set by the NHC Board of Directors. Beyond music, DJs must be vigilant and always prepared to manage the crowds in case of an incident or emergency, no matter the scale. In those spaces, the individual with the microphone is the single-most powerful person in the area and has the greatest responsibilities as well. As CMA Director Lyndon LaCrette put it regarding the mic man: "they [the DJs] can not only create a situation, but also defuse a situation" (CMA meeting

2015). This means the DJs have the power to both get the crowd hyped up at any given moment based on their music selections and de-escalate conflicts should they arise. Because they are always positioned above the crowd, either on tops of trucks or elevated platforms, NHC DJs are the eyes and ears of the carnival space; they are the frontline of entertainment and incident management at carnival where they command the music, the truck floats, the masqueraders, and the crowds within their vicinity.

So what does this look like in real-time? I recall playing with Release D Riddim at NHC 2017 on Carnival Monday, and there were two occasions where members of the crowd began to collectively run in a certain direction. Seeing these individuals run, more people in the crowd began running in the same direction, believing there to be a problem of some sort ahead. At an event that is so dense and as heavily populated as NHC is, these sorts of happenings are incredibly dangerous. More than anything else, it increases the likelihood of a large stampede taking place and people getting trampled in the process. At times when this would happen, the DJ cut the music, got on the mic, and instructed all of the band masquerade members to stand inside the protected yellow ropes, which separated the band from the general public. This provided a way for band members to be accounted for and remain safe while the crowds were running. The command was then followed up with instructions for all masqueraders within the band to hold up their arms so that their wristbands were visible, allowing the band stewards and assigned officers to go through and check that everyone within the ropes were legitimate members of the band. The DJ then reiterated on the mic that he would not turn back on the music until order was restored in the area. Of course, this produced moans and groans of dismay from masqueraders and members of the carnival crowd who wanted the enjoyment to resume. Once the crowd began to settle back down, the music was finally turned back on and then the festivities continued as

programmed.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter linked the historical context for NHC, presented in Chapter 1, to the contemporary cultural production of the NHC street festival. Emphasis was placed on its spatial production and the various activities that occur within the festival grounds in order to account for what transpires during carnival, as well as how these activities unfold in space and time. While the majority of writings on the NHC street festival focus on the visual culture of carnival almost exclusively, this chapter provided a more holistic analysis of the spatial production process and material output from each of the five performance arenas, including the pivotal role that music and sound plays in mediating socio-spatial relations within the festival.

Regarding musicking at NHC more specifically, two things emerged through my analyses of the festival. The first thing pertains to the existence of a distinct, diaspora network for carnival musics. This network helps to facilitate and sustain cross-border connections, cultural ties, and global flows between the Caribbean and its overseas communities. A concentration on carnival-related musicking provides one way of seeing how particular kinds of interrelations and interdependencies are created across the Caribbean diaspora, as evidenced by the annual circulation of soca recordings via carnival. This phenomenon, however, is not unique to the NHC. Other overseas carnivals also import soca recordings from the Caribbean as part of their musical offerings, creating a sense of continuity and coherency within the larger Caribbean carnival circuit, of which NHC is firmly situated. In many ways, the sustained linkages that are created through diasporic musicking in the carnival circuit can also be interpreted as being a part of a "live dialogue" in action that extends beyond the scope of nation and region (Matory 2006:164).

The second important thing of note in my analysis of musicking at NHC concerns the relationship between music, sound, and space. In addition to the "live dialogue" as described above, these forms of diasporic musicking also manifest itself in ways that are particular to its local specificity. For example, in the context of NHC and its spatial production, soca DJs determine when to play certain soca recordings based on the geographical location of their mobile sound truck along the parade route. This includes playing the most exciting and popular tunes of the year when crossing the judging point, as well as playing particular soca recordings when they arrive at specific "island corners." In discussing island corners at NHC (Trini Hill, Bajan Corner, and Grenada Corner), I showed how these locations are transformed into unique "soundmarks" for the projection of particular forms of Caribbean nationalisms.

Through my ethnography, I attempted to illustrate the various complexities of the NHC as a dynamic spatial and cultural production by foregrounding the formal, material, and experiential dimensions that make NHC one of Britain's most spectacular events today and a social space of great value. What started out as a community-building initiative among working class, black and ethnic minority populations in west London has since transformed into the biggest spectacle of culture exhibited in the UK, a multimillion-pound enterprise, and a crucial connecting point within a growing diaspora network for Caribbean carnival art and musics. As a result of its history and cultural legacy, the size, scale, and popularity of the event, and the huge sums of money that it generates, the NHC is suspended in a complex web of signification and engenders varying forms of social, political, economic, and cultural value during its annual production.

In perhaps the best literature review to-date on festivals, Donald Getz, who is one of the leading scholars on international tourism and event management, states that festival studies must

take into account not only the experience of festivals, but also the meanings that are attached to festivals in all of its complexities:

> People create festivals for specific purposes, and one's experience of a festival provides meaning. As well, festivals have importance and multiple meanings within societies and cultures that transcend individual experiences. To fully understand and create knowledge about festivals it is also necessary to consider who produces them and why, how they are planned and managed, why people attend (or do not), their outcomes on multiple levels, and the dynamic forces shaping individual festivals and festival populations (Getz 2010:19-20).

In the following chapter, I explore this phenomenon more fully where I investigate how different meanings and forms of value are engendered in the production of carnival. This is done by shifting from a spatial analysis of NHC, to an actor-centered one, where I focus on particular individuals, groups, and institutions that attend, produce, finance, and manage the NHC street festival. Over the course of Chapter 3, I will not only illustrate how the NHC street festival exists across multiple "regimes of value" simultaneously, but also show how these differing regimes are interrelated, interconnected, and even competitive with one another during the production of NHC.

THREE

REGIMES OF VALUE WITHIN THE NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL

The NHC street festival is a dynamic spatial production that is constituted not only by the specific activities that take place within the festival space, but also by a multiplicity of social relations and positions that exist among those that organize, sponsor, facilitate, participate, and attend the festival. During its annual production, the street festival mediates physical, social, political, and economic processes simultaneously, while also encompassing knowledges, histories, memories, power, meaning, and signification among its various social actors. As a result, the NHC is suspended in webbed networks of interrelations at various scales (local, global, and diasporic), producing what feminist geographer Doreen Massey refers to as the "simultaneous multiplicity of spaces." In this regard, Massey also notes that the "social relations of space are experienced differently, and variously interpreted, by those holding different positions as part of it" (1994:3). This can be seen in the public discourse on NHC, where it is both heralded and promoted as a Caribbean carnival, a black British event, a local community celebration, a multicultural festival, and a tourist attraction concurrently among social actors who have different relationships to, and investments in, the NHC street festival. Thus, as a polyvalent social space, the NHC produces a wide array of meanings and conceptions of value that shifts based on the social position of the actors in question and their affiliation(s) to the carnival space.

Despite being a dynamic arena for the production of different conceptions of value, studies that have been conducted on NHC relative to its "value" have tended to focus primarily on its economic impact, ignoring how non-economic forms of value are also produced through carnival that are, or may be at times, external to its market value. While the market value of NHC certainly illustrates its significance to the local economy, as it generates over £100M

annually, economic valuations of carnival alone does not explain how and why people invest their time, energy, and resources into carnival, nor how carnival and carnival arts evoke, store, and transmit value and meaning to its participants, managers, sponsors, and culture producers.

Building on the historical and cultural contexts of NHC presented in Chapters 1 and 2, this chapter investigates how NHC engenders economic and non-economic forms of value simultaneously among various individuals, groups, and institutions that take part in the street festival in some way, either as general attendees, stakeholders, corporate sponsors, or culture producers (the carnivalists). Moreover, it serves as an illustration that social spaces have histories, they are constituted by social relations and particular activities by actors occupying the space or involved in its production, and they are also given, assigned, or coded with varying meanings and forms of value as well.

When focusing on the actors who take part in the NHC street festival, what is revealed is that people have starkly different relationships to carnival—its history, cultural legacy, and contemporary production. Some are simply a part of a mass of cultural consumers. Others facilitate, manage, and finance the event. And at the core of NHC are the culture producers, those who have been preparing all year to make the material content of carnival. Considering the range of actors who occupy the carnival space, and/or manage and produce the event, points to how people, groups, and institutions have varying degrees of investments in NHC. To unpack this further, I integrate anthropological theories of value to my ethnography of the NHC street festival to better understand what carnival means to these different actors, and how meaning and particular kinds of value are engendered during its production. This will be done by analyzing the different "regimes of value" that co-exist within NHC, drawing on insights from Arjun Appadurai on value, in addition to Michael Lambek's theories of value that are predicated on

actions that become meaningful to social actors. I offer a brief review of both theories in the section below, before continuing with an ethnographic investigation of NHC and its value regimes.

When Appadurai initially developed his theories of value on commodity exchange, it was to also account for the commodity potential of things, which opened the possibility of tracing its trajectory from production, through processes of exchange and consumption. Under these different contexts and conditions, Appadurai argued that the "value coherency" of the thing/commodity in question was variable, never inherent. Additionally, in these different contexts and social worlds, Appadurai also acknowledges that there can be shared standards of value (i.e., regimes) that exist among particular groups of social actors, which also affects the value coherency of the thing/commodity. The analytic model that Appadurai developed can also be applied to analyses of NHC and its social actors, where one can identify shared standards of value among particular groups that occupy and/or produce the festival space. As I will show later in this chapter, the differing, yet interrelated, standards of value for NHC is what makes the street festival a dynamic affair, as well as a highly contested event.

In addition to the spatial analysis of NHC, a focus on actions at carnival can be applied as a methodological strategy to better understand why people do the things they do, and how what they do produce meaning and value for them. In this regard, I find Michael Lambek's theories of action and value to be particularly insightful. As a recap, Lambek's theories distinguishes between value that is produced through labor and those that are produced by action, arguing that the primary difference between the two is the commensurability of the former (its market value), and the incommensurability of the latter, or what he calls "ethical value" (Lambek 2013). Regarding ethics, or the ethical, Lambek makes the point that he is not referring to what is

considered to be "good" or "just," but rather that which conveys or influences meaning, significance, a specific attitude, or approach to life. These, he argues, can be understood in relation to action (Lambek 2015). And while ethical values can exist alongside market values, they are not deducible to economic terms.

Lambek also suggest that there are at least two modalities of action that produces varying forms of value: performance and practice. Actions that are ongoing and continuous, the "doing rather than the done," Lambek views as practice. Performances, on the other hand, are specifically marked in space and time, consisting of actions that are divided up and discontinuous. This distinction can be used to interrogate conflicts between groups within NHC, especially among those that view carnival primarily as a large-scale, two-day street party (carnival as a performance), versus those that understand it to be the culminating event of a year-long series of activities (carnival as a practice). Drawing on first-hand accounts, personal interviews, news reports, and survey data on or about NHC, I will show how the meaning of carnival varies from group to group based on their disposition and relationship to the street festival. With the insights of Appadurai and Lambek in mind, I turn now to my case study of the NHC, with a particular focus on the different social actors, groups, and institutions that take part in the festival.

IDENTIFYING NHC VALUE REGIMES

In the realm of NHC, there are at least four (4) co-existing value regimes that I have identified, and just as the performance arenas of carnival are interrelated, there are also interrelationships that exist between the regimes. The first and perhaps most obvious regime that I call attention to is the *general public* that attends the free event. This is mostly a mixed audience, in terms of age and the cultural/ethnic backgrounds of attendees, though the majority

of carnival-goers are white. This also includes the thousands of overseas tourists that attend the event as well. A second NHC value regime can be seen among the event's *stakeholders* who have political stakes in the event, and occupy managerial positions that affect the execution of the festival. The stakeholders of NHC include the following entities: the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, City of Westminster, Metropolitan Police Services, British Transport Police, Transport for London, London Underground, London Buses, St. John Ambulance, London Ambulance Service, London Fire Emergency and Planning Authority, and the Greater London Authority. A third value regime of NHC consists of the *corporate sponsors* that have various economically-centered investments in the street festival. The fourth and final NHC value regime I discuss in this chapter involves its culture producers, those who are commonly regarded as *carnivalists*. They consist of the organizers, band leaders, masqueraders, musicians, DJs, and revelers that engage in carnival-related events throughout the year, including at NHC, many of whom are black and of Caribbean heritage.

The value regimes of NHC were determined by insights I have gained over the years, mostly from the perspective of carnivalists, who are the focus of this dissertation. In particular, they distinguish themselves from the general population of people at carnival based on shared or agreed upon values, their relationship to carnival and the festival space, and the activities that they engage in before, during, and after NHC. They consider themselves to be makers of carnival, its culture producers and active participants, rather than mere spectators.

Additionally, the carnivalists who occupy managerial roles over the cultural production of NHC (LNHCET - see Chapter 2), also distinguish themselves from the stakeholders, though both are concerned with the execution of NHC. The primary difference between the groups relates to power and influence. Every year they have lasting arguments and debates about the logistics of

NHC operations—how it should be run, organized, policed, etc. While compromises are usually met in time for carnival, though not everything is always agreed upon, the carnivalist organizers of NHC have often had to take the "short-end of the stick" in order to ensure that NHC would be staged. One of the more obvious things that surface during these annual debates and planning processes is that LNHCET and NHC stakeholders do not always share the same sentiments concerning the cultural elements of carnival. So there are usually disagreements about the politics of the space relationally to cultural activities that take place in space.

Lastly, carnivalists need financial resources in order to stage the NHC. One would think that due to the size, scale, and how profitable NHC is, carnival would be self-sustainable at this stage. That could not be further from the truth. For example, while some masquerade bands receive funding from the Arts Council of England or some corporate entity, most NHC masquerade bands are greatly under-financed, making it more difficult to produce their desired presentations for carnival. Nonetheless, this reliance on outside financial assistance has also opened the door for the commercial exploitation of NHC and its art forms. Based on these insights, I will now present analyses of the different value regimes at NHC.

GENERAL PUBLIC

The NHC is the single most-attended event in the UK every year, and those that come out for carnival include local residents, as well as attendees hailing from different places throughout the country and around the world. According to data collected from NHC 2016, about 30% of carnival attendees are white British/Irish compared to 23% that are Black Caribbean, while 47% are listed as Other (these include other racial/ethnic/national groups, as well as non-British

tourist more generally).[29] The majority of NHC attendees are from London (approximately 65% of total attendees). This includes residents of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and non-RBKC residents alike, though most Londoners that attend NHC are not RBKC residents; they mostly come from different parts of the city. Additionally, 35% of NHC attendees are non-London residents, with 43% of this population representing overseas visitors. Among the general public, the NHC is thus experienced as both a local cultural event and as an international tourist attraction.

While Caribbean carnival arts and culture are the focal point of the festival, for a large section of the NHC general public, their attendance at carnival is primarily due to its social dimensions. For many of them, NHC is simply a huge summer festival that features a plethora of food stalls, drink stations, and exhibitions of black art and musics. Additionally, NHC is free, families are welcome to take part in the event, and people (young and old) can meet up with their friends and party in the streets for two days. Within this regime, a reductionist view and understanding of carnival exists, one where carnival is oftentimes largely divorced from its cultural origins and historical significance in Notting Hill, and is, instead, recontextualized as a space of leisure and entertainment during the summer Bank Holiday weekend. The result is that the majority population of NHC attendees think of carnival as only the street festival that takes place over the Bank Holiday weekend rather than the culmination of a year-long series of activities that take place, of which the street festival is but one component.

This assessment is made based on attending a multitude of carnival-related activities and events in London since 2013, including the NHC. What has fascinated me most is that the demographics for the NHC street festival are radically different than for the other carnival-

[29] Details of NHC demographics can be found on the chart posted on page 7. http://www.thelondonnottinghillcarnival.com/img/sponsors/sponsor.pdf

related events and activities that take place throughout the year. Whereas white youth and young adults represent the majority of attendees at NHC, they are either not in attendance at all or make up a mere fraction of those who attend carnival-related events beyond the street festival (the London Calypso Tent, Panorama, soca fêtes and concerts, masquerade band launches, etc.). This observation points to different understandings and perceptions of what carnival is (e.g., a *performance* versus a *practice*) and what it means to different groups of people (general public vs. carnivalists). Stephen Spark, one of the most respected NHC journalists and a regular participant at carnival observes this same phenomenon in a 2015 magazine article he published in *Soca News*, where he wrote:

> Who'll be Panorama champions this year? Who'll be crowned Calypso Monarch? Is my costume ready? Days leading up to Notting Hill Carnival are full of questions . . . It's only the sort of people who call Notting Hill a 'street party' who think Carnival is confined to Bank Holiday Monday (8).

The "sort of people who call Notting Hill a 'street party'" and "think Carnival is confined to Bank Holiday Monday" are those members of the general public that experience carnival as a singular, discontinuous *performance* that happens once a year, as opposed to being the apex a year-long *practice*.

NHC STAKEHOLDERS

As previously stated, NHC stakeholders range from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the Metropolitan Police Services, to Transport for London and the Greater London Authority. They represent an entirely different NHC value regime than that which exists among the NHC general public, which is largely centered on the social dimensions of carnival. In contrast, the primary concerns of NHC stakeholders consist of managing and controlling various aspects of the carnival, namely the form that the festival takes and how its operations will function. In other words, this regime is centered on the politics of the space in which the

carnival takes place. I will illustrate this through a focus on two separate NHC stakeholders: the RBKC council, since carnival takes place within the boundaries of their district, and the Metropolitan Police Services (MPS) who are charged with maintaining public safety and order during the course of the festival.

Under the "leisure and culture" tab of the official RBKC website, there is an event section that is dedicated to the Notting Hill Carnival. The website states the relationship of the council to the carnival is as follows:

> The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea does not organise Notting Hill Carnival—*we facilitate the event*. We recognise the impact Carnival has on the lives of those who live and work in Notting Hill and surrounding areas. Throughout the year we have worked closely with Westminster City Council, the Metropolitan Police, and the Carnival organisers, London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprises Trust Ltd (LNHCET) to ensure that not only do we have a great Carnival, but that *we also get a fair deal for our residents* (my emphasis, RBKC website on NHC).

Facilitating carnival consists of a multitude of things, including providing provisions for set up, food and beverages for carnival attendees, accessible public toilet facilities, emergency personnel and first-aid stations, and overseeing clean up services at the conclusion of carnival. In addition to these services, the council also conducts annual surveys among RBKC residents concerning carnival in order to obtain general feedback on their experiences and any grievances they may have about the production of the event. The council then reports on issues raised through the surveys and provide recommended "council action" to deliver improvements on carnival regulations and control to the satisfaction of its residents. These recommendations are later sent to the organizers of carnival, as well as the Metropolitan Police, in advance of NHC the following year.

The report from the NHC 2015 survey among RBKC residents that I've obtained reveal the extent to which some residents absolutely love carnival, citing the "atmosphere" as what they liked most, while others loathe the event for a multitude of reasons. The council report indicates

that 65% of residents who responded to the survey stated they attended NHC 2015, with 82% of resident-attendees stating they thought the event was "good or very good," scoring it 7-10 out of 10. However, residents also indicated that they were most dissatisfied with three things during NHC: 1) provision of toilets (46%), 2) location of sound systems (23%), and 3) RBKC taking action on noise issues (22%). 35% of RBKC residents who responded to the survey stated they did not attend NHC 2015. Here are some of their comments on why they did not attend carnival. One person stated the reasons they did not attend is due to "Horrific noise . . . crowds too dense to move or escape or get to a loo." Another responded saying, "Live in the area and feel trapped. Hate the noise, crowds and litter" (section 3.3 of page 4).[30]

The "intrusiveness" of NHC and the "inconveniences" it causes some local residents are common themes that have been expressed to the RBKC council through the survey reports. These sentiments also find resonance in various media reports as well. In 2017, London-based blogger and carnivalist A.C. Christie did an interview with RBKC residents concerning NHC and posted their responses on her *I Love Carnival: Carnival Chronicles and Other Adventures* page on November 19. The blog post was called "Notting Hill Carnival??? No Thanks." All interviewees requested to remain anonymous. Two entries included in her post stated the following:

> [Response 1] But this is MY home! Some of you may have lived here before but most of you don't anymore. Most of you never lived here. And yet you still throw your party here EVERY year. Can't you see the neighbourhood has changed? I don't like you here. You don't fit in anymore. Why can't you do like the Glastonbury lot and have it somewhere outside of London?
>
> [Response 2] This has gotten bigger. A lot bigger. Before it was just West Indians that were involved in this street party. But it isn't anymore is it? There are the Brazilians, Africans and all others. And apart from that, there are these little street parties

[30] The RBKC survey results for NHC 2015 can be found at http://carnivalvillage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/A10.-Carnival-Residents-Survey-Results.pdf

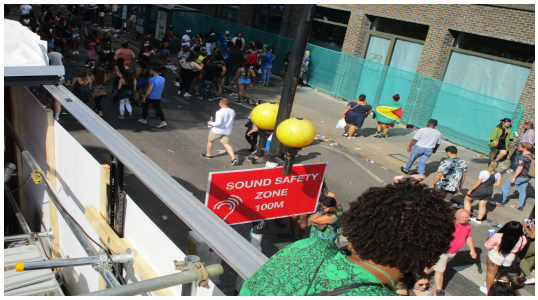
> everywhere. I don't mean to sound like a grumpy old fart. But there are people drinking booze, messing up cars with paint, powder, whatever, throwing up and urinating everywhere. How would you feel if people you don't know urinated in your back yard? On your doorstep? Don't really care that it is just for two days. You're a stranger taking the piss (literally).[31]

Like the official RBKC surveys, Christie's interviews show that the size and scale of NHC has created some major concerns for local residents, in addition to issues with noise levels and sanitation. Both shed light on the antagonistic relationship between a sizeable (and growing) swath of disgruntled RBKC community members and those they deem to be "outsiders" (i.e., non-RBKC residents and the majority population of carnival attendees). However, what also comes to the surface from Christie's interviews that is largely absent from the RBKC council report is a sense of the imbalanced structures of power at NHC and within RBKC concerning the right to the space and how the carnival space is to be used. These contestations over the NHC space are, of course, also racialized and classed in very particular ways; for NHC started in Ladbroke Grove, Notting Hill (which is within RBKC) among black and ethnic minority community members that have been historically marginalized in Britain, many of whom can no longer afford to live in Notting Hill and are now being pushed out of the area due to gentrification.

As an influential stakeholder in the NHC, the RBKC council has the power and some authority to translate the concerns of its residents into policies that directly impact the operations of the NHC. One example of this concerns noise level complaints at carnival. As a result of the RBKC surveys and recommendations made by their council, there are now "hot spot" areas along the carnival parade route with signs posted that read: "Sound Safety Zones" and "Music Hotspot" (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). While passing through such areas, the mobile performance units

[31] More responses can be found on AC Christie's official website: http://ilovecarnivall.co.uk/notting-hill-carnival-no-thanks/

have to reduce the volume of their music, with the hope that, as a joint, collective effort, it will help to bring down noise levels at carnival. This policy has been in place since NHC 2015.





Figures 3.1 and 3.2 – Sound/music restrictions at NHC

Despite the large strain that the production of NHC puts on local residents, it also greatly benefits the borough in many ways, most notably by bringing in hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of revenue into RBKC.[32] One of the main ways this is achieved annually is through the institutionalization of a licensing system for traders at NHC. Every year, the RBKC council allocates space for traders who pay a registration and license fee to conduct business at NHC (note: the City of Westminster does the same for the stalls located in their jurisdiction). This includes food and beverage, as well as other merchandise items like t-shirts, flags, whistles, etc.[33] Trading hours at NHC are from 7am to 8pm. The cost to obtain a trading site at NHC range from £460 (for the smallest operating units) to £1150 (for the largest operating units). According to the NHC 2017 mobile phone app, there were at least 242 street traders listed as participating

[32] In a Freedom of Information request to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea concerning licensing fees at NHC, Robin YU (Information Governance and Management Officer) stated that licensing fees at NHC generates about £261,000 a year. See the following website for further information: https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/licencing_for_notting_hill_carni.

[33] The general guidelines for trading at NHC can be found at https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/events/street-trading-notting-hill-carnival.

vendors during carnival. So, in addition to council action recommendations that are made and delivered to the NHC organizers to ensure that carnival is a "fair deal" for RBKC residents, the council reinforces this by managing the carnival licensing system for traders at NHC, whereby the revenue generated from the fees go directly to RBKC rather than to LNHCET and its carnival organizing entities.

The London Metropolitan Police Services is another critical NHC stakeholder that manages and exercises some level of control over carnival. First and foremost, it cannot be overstated just how difficult a task policing such a large-scale event is, especially since it takes place in such a densely packed residential area. In many ways, the NHC can be a logistical nightmare for MPS. In trying to maintain public safety and order at NHC, the Met Police have to manage issues of overcrowding, direct vehicular traffic in and around the area (especially emergency vehicles that may need to be dispatched), as well as mitigate other disturbances that may occur on site, violent and non-violent alike (possession of weapons, drug usage, assault, theft, etc.). While the implementation of different security measures are necessary to keep the public safe from a logistical perspective, there is also a very complicated history between the organizers of carnival, the revelers (particularly those of color), and the Metropolitan Police, and these directly affect NHC operations every year.

The involvement of the London Metropolitan Police with the NHC stretches back nearly 40 years, to the 1970s. While relatively small numbers of police officers patrolled the NHC during its first decade of existence, as more black youth began to attend carnival, more police were assigned to carnival duty. So there is an obvious parallel, historically speaking, between the NHC becoming a large, identifiably black (and working class) event on one hand and the marked increase in the number of police present at carnival on the other. In "Carnival, the State, and the

Black Masses in the United Kingdom"(2000), Cecil Gutzmore discusses the range of confrontations that arise between the police and black people in relation cultural events, cultural venues, cultural forms, and cultural practices in the UK. Gutzmore explicitly argues that when it comes to black masses in Britain, especially at events as large as NHC, "there is state repression of what is perceived to be dangerous, or potentially dangerous, disruptive, or undisciplined culture on the part of the black masses" (363). Such perceptions of "potential danger" occurring in spaces identified with black people, and subsequent responses by MPS to quell these perceived "dangers" by overpolicing these spaces, have had real consequences on the increased likelihood of confrontations arising between black masses and the police, as can be seen in the aftermath of NHC 1976 (see Chapter 1). This particular disturbance forever changed the relationship between the police and the organizers of carnival, which has only been exacerbated over the years by other uprisings in London between the public and police, particularly in Brixton (1981 and 1985), as well as the riots of 2011 following the shooting death of Mark Duggan at the hands of Met Police.

In the aftermath of NHC 1976 and these other incidents, the Metropolitan Police have had a great hand in determining the shape and outcome of virtually every carnival from the 1980s onwards. They, not the carnival organizers, have determined the time that NHC starts and ends, the route that performance units are to follow, what roads will be restricted access within the festival grounds, among many other things that dictate how the festival operates. The extent of their power and influence over NHC was so much that NHC 1989 was even regarded as a "Police Carnival" by some carnivalists and general attendees alike[34]. Though the policies and

[34] Unsurprisingly, the Metropolitan Police and British media hailed NHC 1989 as the "best carnival ever" after new restrictions were applied to carnival.

practices implemented by MPS at carnival have evolved over the past few decades, with new forms of surveillance and crowd management strategies being deployed in recent years, the struggle for control over the space remains the same. Today, 13,000 Met police officers and 1,000 British Transport Police are assigned carnival duty over the two days, and approximately £7-8M of NHC funds are allocated for MPS.[35]

In interviews I've conducted among carnivalists, and in commentary delivered at carnival-related events I've attended over the years, many people have complained about how police force, power, and control are operationalized at carnival. For example, some people involved in carnival have complained that the police use NHC as a training ground for young officers in crowd/riot control, while others have suggested that carnival has also become a source of political propaganda by members of the Met Police. Regarding the latter, they point to the weaponization of crime statistics at NHC by the police, which then gets picked up and exploited by the media to create sensationalist headlines and news stories that negatively portray NHC.

To this point, according to carnival historian Michael La Rose, "Carnival is reported, not as a fantastic cultural and artistic achievement, but as a public order problem centered on street crime" (1989:1). These crime statistics are rendered as proof among MPS and several British media outlets alike that NHC is, indeed, a "public order problem," and the idea of carnival as a problem is then privileged over discussions of the many benefits that carnival bring to London and the UK. There are dozens of such examples that can be found in the headlines of British media concerning carnival every year. Here, I present a few that have been printed in the past couple years. In a 2015 September article published by the *Evening Standard*, the headline read,

[35] See the Freedom of Information Request for the monetary breakdown of policing NHC: https://www.met.police.uk/globalassets/foi-media/disclosure_2016/october_2016/information-rights-unit---costs-of-policing-notting-hill-carnival-2015

"Notting Hill Carnival Organisers Slammed over 'Unacceptable' Crime Rise."[36] In August 2016, BBC News described NHC as a "Bank Holiday Battleground," with the headline of the article reading, "Notting Hill Carnival: Police Officers 'Dread' the Event."[37] An August 2017 article published in *The Telegraph* headline read, "Notting Hill Carnival Should Be Cancelled, London Federation Police Leader Suggests."[38] Finally, the official Twitter account of the Metropolitan Police posted the following on August 22, 2017: "In the run up to #NottingHillCarnival, officers have this morning seized what is believed to be a kilo of uncut heroin in #Catford." This tweet was later picked up by a number of British media sources, including *The Guardian*, who published their article with the following headline: "Police Arrest Hundreds in Pre-Notting Hill Carnival Crime Crackdown."[39] Both the tweet and media coverage of the drugs and weapons seized in police raids during August fueled an outcry from the local community, as well as some notable celebrities. Their primary grievance stemmed from the fact that the alleged crimes that took place had absolutely nothing to do with NHC—these happened before NHC and occurred in south London, not west London where carnival is held. However, by reporting on crime and mentioning NHC in the same report, it creates a correlation between the two no matter how egregious and false the claims may be, and provides additional "rationale" for those parties seeking to shut NHC down, relocate it, or dramatically alter its current form.

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[36] https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/notting-hill-carnival-organisers-slammed-over-unacceptable-crime-rise-a2955577.html.

[37] http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-37212493.

[38] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/08/29/notting-hill-carnival-should-cancelled-london-police-federation/.

[39] https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2017/aug/25/police-arrest-hundreds-in-pre-notting-hill-carnival-crackdown.

To the latter point, there has even been a recent proposal by the Police and Crime Committee to make NHC a ticket-only event in order to allegedly reduce crime and improve safety measures at NHC.[40] A statement in favor of ticketing in the Police and Crime Committee 2017 report reads as follows: "The Commissioner has said 'a large number of people in a small area' gave the Met [police] 'great concern', and that ticketing could provide it with "a layer of control" (26). To this end, carnival organizers responded by putting out a written statement that read:

> Even if you could somehow cordon off the large Carnival boundary, ticketing would be a step towards making Carnival a commercial event, for which the Carnival Trust [the organizing entity of NHC] would have to pay full policing costs, and there seems no prospect of that possibility for the foreseeable future. Since this would effectively be the end of Carnival as we know it today and very probably finally divorce it from its roots of the Afro-Caribbean community's reaction to the1958 race riots, we believe this cannot be considered (26).

Though the relationship of MPS to the Notting Hill Carnival differs from the RBKC council, the thing they both have in common is the authority to apply varying measures of control to carnival, which directly affects its operations and delivery. Thus, a key component that links the various NHC stakeholders together is their collective role as carnival facilitators, and this role is premised on the politics of the space.

CORPORATE SPONSORS

In addition to the social and political NHC value regimes discussed above, there is also a distinct economic value regime at NHC that can found among its many corporate sponsors. Due to the size and scale of NHC, and the fact that it has an enormous drawing power among youth and young adults, several corporate entities have developed a commercial interest in NHC, resulting in the commoditization of NHC and its associated cultural activities since the 1990s.

[40] More details can be found at the following website: https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/london-assembly-publications/notting-hill-carnival-safer-and-better

Since I began conducting fieldwork in London's carnival scene in 2013, examples of corporate sponsorship at NHC have continued to be prevalent, as they have developed specific economic schemes and strategies for brand marketing and advertising at NHC. Within this value regime, black/Caribbean culture is generally packaged as an exemplar of "British multiculturalism," and through their sponsorships, corporations effectively convert these specialized Caribbean cultural activities, art forms, and the carnival festival itself, into commodities that can be bought, sold, and consumed by the masses. Two examples of this can be seen in the sponsorship of Funatik Mas Band by Tesco, a major grocery store chain in the UK, as well as the sponsorship of Bacchanalia Mas Band by ORS, a beauty cosmetic company.

Since 2014, Tesco has been the corporate sponsor of Funatik Mas Band, which is led by legendary soca DJ Martin Jay. In the week leading up to the NHC for the past couple of years, several Tesco stores in west London have given their facilities a "carnival makeover" for customers, complete with performing steelpan musicians, masqueraders in full costume, samples of Caribbean food and drinks, and host of activities for children like face-painting (Figure 3.3).



24 Aug 2016

Tesco is supporting this year's Notting Hill Carnival with in store displays, offers and Caribbean beach parties in selected stores.

Figure 3.3 – Screenshot from Tesco website

To coincide with the in-store makeover, the following was posted on their official website and social media page:

> For a *real taste of the Caribbean*, customers were invited to sample a variety of *tropical punches served in coconuts*, and snacks including tropical fruit skewers and plantain crisps. The stores were also *decked out with palm trees and oceanfront signs to complete the beach party vibe* and face painters were also on hand to create *glittering Caribbean-inspired designs* [emphasis added].

Continuing with a statement from Martin Smith, the then Tesco London Convenience Director added:

> We're absolutely delighted to be supporting this year's Notting Hill Carnival and were [sic] thrilled to *host our very own Caribbean beach party* in two of our local stores. *The festival is such a vibrant and unique London event* and we've made sure our stores near the parade have everything Carnival-goers need, from rum cocktails to plantain crisps. *Stores across London will also be getting into the spirit with amazing Caribbean products and promotions* [emphasis added].[41]

The information provided on the website illustrates how corporations develop different strategies to convert the culture and activities of NHC into forms of economic capital. In this example, Tesco creates pseudo "Caribbean" spaces in select stores in Notting Hill for a limited time by using carnival to sell "amazing Caribbean products" and in-store promotions to customers. In order to complete the transformation process, black masquerading bodies and other sights, sounds, and images associated with carnival are joined with staged props (e.g., faux palm trees) and particular store products to serve as signifiers of "the real taste of the Caribbean." Collectively, these aid in their fantasy production of a carnivalesque "Caribbean beach party" in Tesco stores. Thus, while Tesco offers important financial support to Funatik, it also fetishizes the island cultures of the Caribbean by using both the band and carnival to draw more customers to their stores specifically for the purposes of purchasing their products, while masquerading their annual for-profit scheme as "getting into the spirit" for carnival. In many ways, this can be

[41] Information can be found on the Tesco website: https://www.tescoplc.com/news/news-releases/2016/notting-hill-carnival-2016/

seen as an example of what sociologist Mimi Sheller describes as the continuing practice of "consuming the Caribbean"; that is, the unceasing consumption of "the natural environment, commodities, human bodies, and cultures of the Caribbean over the past five hundred years" (Sheller 2003:3). I will conclude this section with ethnographic insights on the sponsorship of Bacchanalia Mas Band by ORS.

In 2016, I was part of food team called "In A Pikkle" that catered to Bacchanalia Mas Band. As part of the In A Pikkle team, I was able to go on the road with Bacchanalia and get an up-close-and-personal account of their masquerade experience. While servicing the 200+ member band, I started to pay particular attention to another team that was partnering with Bacchanalia, a group of about 15 black women (and 1 man) who were representatives of the cosmetic company ORS. The representatives would take green cloth bags stuffed with Olive Oil cosmetic products and other miscellaneous objects, and pass them out to carnival attendees in the streets (Figures 3.4 and 3.5).





Figures 3.4 and 3.5 – ORS representatives passing out gift bags to attendees at NHC 2016

After seeing this unfold a few times, I later asked one of the ladies that was a part of the team for a small explanation of what they were tasked to do. She told me they were giving the bags away to members of the general public at carnival for free, as long as they followed through

with the give-away guidelines set by ORS. The guidelines were as follows: the potential recipient had to 1) have an Instagram social media account, 2) "like" the official ORS page on Instagram, 3) take a picture with the ORS representative that presented them with the give-away bag, 4) upload the photo to their own Instagram account and tag the ORS Instagram account page, and then 5) they would receive the bag of free items courtesy of ORS. The items included in the give-away bag were a poncho, a miniature-sized bottle of Wray and Nephew rum (50mL), a portable charger, a bar of chocolate, a bracelet, shampoo and conditioner, a notepad and pen, a pair of sunglasses, some anti-breakage oil, an Oyster card holder for public transportation in London, a DVD and CD of carnival music, and finally, a black beauty magazine.

One of the things that emerge through this ethnographic account is how carnival provides a special opportunity for potential corporate investors, like ORS, to advertise their company's brand and products to a large audience beyond the use of just television and radio adverts. This is done firstly by embedding their brands within the social space of carnival by plastering mobile sound trucks with corporate banners that circulate throughout the carnival grounds. Additionally, by integrating social media platforms, like Instagram, as part of their on-the-ground promotion strategies, these corporations are also able to effectively advertise their brand within the social media networks of carnival attendees, which then also filters directly to the followers of carnival attendees as well.

In this particular era of neoliberal capitalism that enables and encourages a free entrepreneurial market, there have been sharp increases in the number of corporations, and the methodologies they employ, that attempt to "bring all human action into the domain of the market" (Harvey 2007:3). This has been especially true for large-scale events like cultural festivals, where "multiculturalism" is now viewed as a marker of value that creates new

incentives for investment. As a result, the NHC has become fertile ground for corporate investors in the UK and beyond seeking to expand their reach to a more diverse demographic. What begins to surface from the accounts of sponsorship by Tesco and ORS in particular are some of the specific strategies and schemes corporations use for brand marketing and product placement within the carnival space, with carnival masquerade bands being the premier focal point and medium of their advertising efforts.

CARNIVALISTS

The final value regime I will explore in this chapter concerns the carnivalists, those who organize and participate in the NHC and other carnival events throughout the year. What oftentimes get lost in the festive merriment of carnival among the general population of carnival attendees is why the carnival was formed in the first place, and its significance to Britain's black/Caribbean communities. The NHC was formed out of responses to issues of British racism, xenophobia, discrimination, violence, and a burgeoning exclusivist nationalism that marginalized ethnic minority communities in the UK, particularly the growing black community in Notting Hill and beyond in the post-WWII period. Within this context, the carnival developed over the years into what social geographer Peter Jackson has called a "contested event that expresses political and ideological conflict" (1988:214); this conflict is predicated on the meaning of black presence in Britain, from the large-scale migration and resettlement of black people in Britain and the subsequent occupation of public spaces by black bodies, to the very place and value of black people and black culture to British society. As a result, it is at carnival where the various contributions of black Britain to British popular culture are exhibited to the wider public, and simultaneously where issues of race, gender, class, and other power relations in Britain clash annually on the streets of Notting Hill. Carnival thus highlights the struggles of black and ethnic

minority communities for inclusion and recognition in Britain, while also providing a mobilizing force to confront British racism, marginalization, and the onslaught of injustices afflicting these particular social groups.

In addition to the larger political project of NHC as a form of "spatial entitlement," as described in Chapter 1, members of LNHCET and Carnival Village Trust also work tirelessly to spread cultural knowledge of carnival, its historical origins and significance in Notting Hill, as well as its various linkages to the traditions of carnival in the Caribbean and across the black/Caribbean diasporas. This is done through the production of not only the NHC street festival, but also a slew of workshops, educational forums, masquerade camps, music rehearsals, performances, concerts, and competitions that are put on throughout the year. Thus, within this regime, NHC is imbued with social, political, economic, and cultural value simultaneously among carnivalists, and each of these are salient in different ways and in different moments. This will be illustrated through several interviews, social media excerpts, and ethnographic descriptions of my experiences in London's carnival scene since 2013.

The first example I use is of Tameeka Burke, who is British-born of Jamaican parentage and works as a substitute teacher. At the time of the interview, Tameeka was a costume designer for Genesis Masquerade Band. In our 2013 interview, Tameeka informed me that when she is not teaching, she is "making costumes." After learning this, I followed up by asking her if she got paid for designing costumes, to which she replied,

> No. Volunteer, *just for the love of it* . . . it's like, obviously like now, we're stressed and we're tired. But on the day when everybody's in their costume, and you look and you go "wow, I did that." It's the best feeling [emphasis added].

Later in the interview, she began speculating about how she would feel if Genesis did not have mas camp next year.

> I actually don't know what I would do . . . This is like my hobby! You have to

> understand, this is the time where I can see the other side of my family. Cuz everyone here is my family [she has no biological ties to the other members] (Burke 2013).

Here we can see that there is something else that underlies the reason(s) why Tameeka does what she does, and it extends beyond economic motivations, as her investment in the process of making carnival costumes is completely voluntary. Moreover, what seems to be of more importance to her are non-economic forms of value that are engendered during the production process of costume-building; that is, the fostering of social bonds and relations with fellow costume designers, band members, and masqueraders.

In a 2016 interview that I was allowed to sit in on with Carl Gabriel, one of the leading carnival masquerade designers and sculpture artists in the UK, he too spoke of other motivations for his involvement in carnival beyond monetary incentives. When asked, "what does carnival mean to you, personally?" by the interviewer Tony Oldham, Gabriel responded by saying the following:

> Well me personally, it means a hell of a lot. It means . . . *it's like life, really*. And *it just makes me feel really good to be keeping that tradition alive*, and I just feel that I'm doing the ancestors work. That is what drives me. *To do the sort of work that we do, you really need something more than money. Money comes, but we need something more.* And deep in my psyche, it's the ancestors and we're doing it for a reason [emphasis added, Gabriel 2016].[42]

In a private conversation I had with Carl a few years ago, he shared with me that his sculptures have been exhibited all over the world. An artist of his caliber, with his unique skillset and expertise, could demand to be paid exponentially more than what he normally gets from carnival art productions. But he understands the reality of the NHC economy; while it generates huge sums of money, carnival artists are not compensated anything close to what they contribute to the British economy.

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[42] Carl Gabriel was being interviewed by Tony Oldham for an upcoming documentary project. I was allowed to sit in and record the interview.

In 2015, I interviewed Vincent John, former Trustee Director of LNHCET, band leader for DUKA Mas band and current chairman of the London Calypso Tent. In the interview, he pointed out the gross economic disparities that exist in the production of the NHC street festival, between what carnival generates and the amount of money that it receives through Arts Council funds and corporate sponsorship. While carnival generates over £100M, the culture producers and organizers of NHC receive less than a quarter of a million for infrastructure, event management, and the creation of its material content, according to John. For him, the disparity is most evident in the realm of masquerade production and performance, where only a few of the larger bands receive Council funds or some form of sponsorship, and many of the smaller bands are forced to brunt the financial burden of producing a large-scale performance on their own. Additionally, there are no financial rewards for placing 1st through 3rd for masquerade presentations at NHC, so economic incentives for involvement in carnival masquerade are relatively small. Despite this, band leaders and masqueraders alike continue to be committed to producing carnival as an art form and as an event because they believe the experience of carnival to be priceless.

> Masqueraders are the paupers of carnival . . . As a mas band leader, I'm invariably asked to use my credit card to actually make financial commitments, such as paying for my carnival float, paying for my transport, and many other things to make sure the mas band goes out on the road. And people will save the money to spend £150-200 on their carnival costumes just to come out. The significance of carnival for, not only Caribbean people, increasingly for the general population or a large proportion of it, is priceless. *It couldn't be measured in purely economic terms*. There's a level of commitment. *It is something that you do because it's a labor of love*, in some cases. But the benefit that you get from it is seeing so many people enjoying themselves over a period of time. *There is no way you can actually measure that through any fiscal arrangement. So that keeps us going.*
>
> On the other side, carnival is generating a lot of money, but the resources that are put into it by officialdom are infinitesimally small. It's minute. The total amount of money that goes into the infrastructure and the event management, is less than a quarter of million. So all the other costs are met by personal commitments, and sometimes by a bit of sponsorship, but not a lot (emphasis added, John 2015).

This sense of "pricelessness" that is produced through carnival can also be seen in how London carnivalist talk about their experiences and relationship to carnival on social media. Between Twitter and Facebook, I follow several dozen masquerade bands, soca DJs/artists, and other carnival enthusiasts. Over the years, I have documented various social media posts related to upcoming events and even their general sentiments about carnival that have been posted. For many of them, their excitement for carnival isn't just a seasonal phenomenon; they are excited all year for carnival. For example, following London's carnival season in 2015, carnivalists Angie Banton and Tinisha Barnes posted a picture on Facebook of the two together with friends in September that was captioned, "We ready for Carnival all over again." The official Bacchanalia Mas Band account began promoting for NHC 2016 as early as January, posting the following on Facebook: "As we officially face 2016 in all its glory today, lets [sic] do so positively and with intent to be better than we were last year. With Christmas now behind us, we can get started with the business of carnival. Watch out for teasers heading your way for Supernatural 2016" (Facebook post, January 4, 2016). Release D Riddim mas band also began promoting for carnival 2016 at the turn of the new year. On January 22, 2016, they retweeted a carnivalist whose Twitter handle is Zeena (@Avovozz). The post read: "@ReleaseDRiddim will have my team strong at Notting Hill. Cannot be late for when the costumes go live!" (Twitter post). In an April 2016 Facebook post, Lee Dee, one of the costume designers for Karnival Mania masquerade band posted the following to its page: "Carnival is all of our 1st loves, this is not a hobby, this is a part of our culture, we eat, sleep, drink, sing, breath [sic], dance, speak soca 24/7-365 days a year and in our sleep (Facebook post, 2016). Finally, just three weeks after NHC 2016, Bacchanalia Mas Band posted the unfinished phrase, "Carnival is . . .", on their Facebook

page. This solicited dozens of responses from followers. A sample of some of the responses include “Carnival is life”; “Carnival is my/we culture”; and “Carnival is unity and freedom.”

In each of these interviews and social media excerpts above, what emerges are insights into how carnival is viewed as a practice, performance, and production among carnivalists, and in turn, why carnival produces different non-economic forms of value for carnivalists, social and cultural among them. These conceptions of value also supports Lambek’s theories of “ethical value,” where some of the activities involved are related to the production of commodities, and thus have a particular market value (i.e, the making of carnival masquerade costumes), while a great deal of the cultural practice of carnival is more of a labor of love than an economic venture for many people.

The NHC is also often imbued with political value as well by carnivalists, stemming from 1) the event being seen as emblematic of black cultural resilience in postwar London/UK; 2) from the mere fact that hundreds of thousands of black and working class people annually control the streets of the wealthiest borough in the UK; and 3) from carnivalists using this major public platform to speak out against the myriad of injustices effecting their communities. Examples of each of these came up at carnival-related events I’ve attended, or in interviews I’ve conducted, over the years.

In 2014, I attended a book launch event titled, “Carnival: A Photographic and Testimonial History of the Notting Hill Carnival.” One of the invited speakers for the event was Charlie Phillips, who is arguably the most important photographer of NHC since the early years of carnival and was a contributor to the newly published book. During his speech, Phillips spoke at length about the importance of documenting black British history, with carnival being viewed

as an extraordinary model of the legacy and resiliency of black/Caribbean people and their culture in postwar Britain.

> Well, over the years, many of you know me. Many years ago, many of you thought I was crazy. But I always wanted to document our history. Our history still hasn't been given a proper platform. We've been taxpayers, and you look at some of the major institutions, they never heard of us . . . And I'm so glad for the first time that we can get together as a community and produce this fantastic book.
>
> Most of our culture has been hijacked, from the music, from the arts, from fashion, from the food, and yet we still haven't got a platform. As taxpayers, for the last 500 years, we are still not represented in some of the big cultural institutions . . . When you see one million can come out singing, having fun, enjoying themselves, after 500 years, with the battering, and the suffering, and the oppression . . . we take all the bashing, but we're still here (Philip 2014).

At the same event, calypsonian Alexander D Great sang a new kaiso he wrote that served as a dedication to carnival and the book. In the chorus of his carnival dedication song, Alex sang about the marvels of NHC (the costumes, music, and dance exhibitions), as well as the passion that goes into putting on such a spectacular display of culture in the nation's capital. During one of our interviews together, Alex shared his views on carnival with me, revealing the existence of a "love-hate relationship" when it comes to NHC:

> London boasts that it is one of the most multicultural capitals in the world, if not the most . . . It [the city] likes to show that we have more cultures here (the Chinese, the Indians, the Pakistanis, the Turks . . . and the Caribbeans, the Africans). *I think it's a love-hate relationship*. They hate the fact that we take over the Notting Hill area for two days because a lot of people are put out by that. They leave the area for the two days. They take their cars and they go somewhere else. They check into a hotel out of town. At the same time, it brings in about 100 million pounds, and they [the city and NHC stakeholders] know they love that . . . What happens is, the train service suddenly has ten times the volume of travelers than any other day of the year. They're making money hand over fist . . . Carnival is a very big thing because *it is a statement of our culture* . . . It's been established now. It's there and ain't gonna go away (emphasis added, Alexander D Great, 2013).

The love-hate relationship with NHC described by Alex, particularly among residents in RBKC that may have recently moved to the area, coincides with insights provided to me by Vincent John during our 2017 interview. Like Alex, Vincent also spoke about carnival being

reflective of a "statement" that illustrates the undying commitment of NHC carnivalists to the local community in which the carnival takes place:

> Admittedly, it [carnival] is intrusive in terms of the local residents, some of them. But when you look at it, this "intrusiveness" is a reflection of a statement; *a statement that we are part of the community*, an area that was predominately poor has become gentrified, occupied by people many of whom have no relationship whatsoever with the area. Now the community is very important, as Grenfell showed you.[43] The *importance of local community*, giving such people a platform, respect, and treating them as human beings is far more important than a person who comes into Kensington and Chelsea, and purchases a building for £3M and lives in an ivory tower. So to some extent, the *carnival not only presents what we as a people would like to see, but also transmits a message to the local residents and in many cases support the local residents*. It was so pleasing to hear from the Grenfell community, yes we'd like the carnival to go ahead as a mark of respect, to honor those who lost their lives, those who were injured, those who are still traumatized by that tragic event. *So yes, carnival has a major, major part to play* [in the community] (emphasis added, John 2017).

This sense of community was demonstrated most vividly at NHC 2017, just two months after the horrific tragedy that befell the Grenfell Tower on June 14th, which resulted in at least 79 reported fatalities and left hundreds of Grenfell residents homeless.[44]

In the aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy, there were not only displays of support for Grenfell at NHC 2017, including a ceremony to remember the victims of Grenfell, but also structural changes made to the carnival itself at behest of the NHC organizers. While London's carnival is typically an endless kaleidoscope of music and sound from early morning until nightfall, as described in Chapter 2, the most resounding component of NHC 2017 was marked by "music free" zones in areas close to where the Tower block is located, in addition to organized silences to pay respect to Grenfell victims. At exactly 3pm on Carnival Sunday and Monday 2017, the music stopped pounding, the engines of the sound trucks were completely shut off, masqueraders ceased all dancing and stood completely still, people who were talking

[43] The Grenfell Tower block that caught fire in 2017 is located in Notting Hill.

[44] See BBC website for more details on the Grenfell Tower fire: http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-40301289.

nearby were shushed, and crowd noise was reduced to virtual murmurs throughout the entirety of the Notting Hill festival grounds. After hours of incessantly loud music, silence had never seemed so loud to my ears. Immediately following the minute-long silence, there was an enormous eruption of collective cheering from within the masquerade band I played with that year, Release D Riddim, and the nearby spectators. Then, thrusting a clinched fist in the air, our DJ Mr. Hardwine yelled out over the mic and towering speaker cabinets: "We want and demand justice for the victims and families of Grenfell!" Among participating carnivalists, NHC 2017 was a collective display of solidarity for Grenfell and the local Notting Hill community.

After conducting 18 months of field research in London's carnival scene, engaging in regular social media research, and interviewing several dozen London-based carnivalists over the past five years, it has become clearer to me that black/Caribbean carnivalists invest their time, energy, and resources into carnival for purposes beyond economic incentives alone, or to simply party in the streets for two days. Instead, their devotion to carnival and ensuring that NHC takes place every year is centered on their unrelenting love of carnival culture (its practice, performance, and production), their desire to promote the contributions of black/Caribbean peoples to Britain and beyond through carnival and carnival arts, and their commitment of support for the Notting Hill community with whom they also have historical ties.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I identified and analyzed four co-existing value regimes within NHC among groups that occupy, manage, finance, and produce the festival space: its general public, stakeholders, corporate sponsors, and culture producers (carnivalists). In addition to providing an overview of the different types of people and organizational entities that are involved in NHC

every year, I also discussed the range of collaborations and negotiations that must occur in order to stage the public event.

It was not my aim to suggest that NHC has a singular, all-encompassing meaning to every person, group, or institution that take part in the festival, whether as a general attendee, stakeholder, sponsor, or carnivalist. Instead, I've tried to acknowledge each of these regimes as interrelated, yet distinguishable, based on shared traits, interests, and social positions, and sought to use questions of value as a methodological tool to better understand how meaning is made and unmade between these social actors in the production of NHC street festival. By doing so, this chapter revealed the range of contestations that arise over the value and meaning of carnival, as well as how the NHC festival space can and should be used.

As my analyses illustrate, the meaning(s) of carnival and NHC changes from context to context depending on the orientation of the group in question and their various stakes in NHC. So while London carnivalists are invested in delivering a world-class cultural performance and product for the general public, one that is rooted in the traditions of the Caribbean and also reflective of the local, black British experience, the involvement of stakeholders in NHC is largely to manage the event by prioritizing public safety during the festival (i.e., the role of the Metropolitan Police Services) and ensuring carnival is executed in the best interest of local residents (i.e., the role of the RBKC council). Additionally, all this transpires in the midst of different corporate sponsors funding a number of NHC masquerade bands and performance stages, while directly benefitting from brand placement and marketing at NHC. Thus, conceptions of value as it pertains to the NHC and its production vary considerably under different conditions and contexts, and these processes occur across cultural, social, political, and economic lines. From this framework, we begin to get a greater sense of how NHC value

regimes co-exist, as well as how they are oftentimes in competition with one another, as the social actors within the various regimes struggle for ownership and control of the festival, its cultural products, and its meaning. As a result, while value may be "a more precise way of attempting to understand meaning," as Timothy Taylor suggests (2017), greater attention to the tensions and struggles that exist within London's carnival arts scene raises new points of inquiry beyond interrogations of meaning and meaning-making by illuminating how modalities of power are both structured and subverted through the production of carnival and carnival arts. What emerges from such an analysis rooted in questions of power is a particular "politics of value" in London's carnival scene, which I explore in greater detail in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Finally, in the following chapter, I move away from analyses of the NHC street festival in isolation as a singular, meta-performance to a focus of carnival as an ongoing practice within the broader carnival scene. This is done through interrogations of carnival musicking during the month of August, with an emphasis on British calypso and the production of the London Calypso Tent. Over the course of Chapter 4, I will show how British calypso has historically played a critical role in making place for black culture and history in the UK, in addition to how the integrity of the calypso art form is maintained today through performances at annual calypso music competitions. Here, I build on the theoretical work of Arjun Appadurai in *Social Life of Things* by producing a musical ethnography of the London Calypso Tent, which I frame as a musical "tournament of value" (1986).

FOUR

MAKING PLACE FOR BRITISH CALYPSO IN THE UK: THE LONDON CALYPSO TENT AS A "TOURNAMENT OF VALUE"

Before reggae and dancehall, before hip hop and the rise of grime, and well before soca became the dominate sound of the NHC, calypso was once the most popular music form in Britain among black postwar migrants, particularly those of Caribbean heritage. There are a myriad of reasons for this. One of the reasons stemmed from the immense popularity of calypso music in the circum-Caribbean region, as the music circulated widely from island to island via touring musicians, radio broadcasts, and commercial recordings in the first half of the twentieth century. Subsequently, after massive Caribbean immigration and resettlement in North American countries and across Europe, calypso became tied to the formation of Caribbean identity in diasporic contexts. Throughout the diaspora, calypso provided a crucial sense of "home" for Caribbean people living abroad, and in Britain, it became the signature music of the Caribbean community in the 1950s and '60s.

Another reason for the international popularity of calypso stemmed from the fact that several well-known calypso stars left the Caribbean for touring gigs abroad and produced calypso records in the U.S. and UK, after taken up residence in metropolitan centers like New York and London. Calypsonians that came to Britain during the postwar era include Lord Kitchener, Lord Beginner, the Mighty Terror, The Roaring Lion, Young Tiger, Lord Invader, Mona Baptiste, Cy Grant, and several others.[45] Calypso fandom within Caribbean communities abroad helped to spread the genre into new territories beyond the Trinidad carnival context, as

[45] Lord Woodbine is another calypso artist of great significance in the UK, albeit Liverpool-based rather than London-based. He is credited as "the mentor of The Beatles," and his musical and arrangement style greatly influenced the trajectory of British popular music in the postwar era.

calypso eventually penetrated the American, British, and European music markets in the immediate postwar decades.

Finally, calypso was also very popular among black postwar migrants in Britain because of its political significance. Postwar calypso artists in the UK not only situated black/Caribbean people as crucial and active members of contemporary Britain in their music—articulating the intersections of blackness with Britishness—but they also addressed a number of the most pressing issues of the times in their music. This included migrant experiences of discrimination and anti-black racism in postwar UK, as well as commentary on "the winds of change" that were galvanizing postwar black politics globally, such as massive decolonization sweeping across Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, in addition to the development and implications of the Civil Rights/Black Power movements in the 1960s. Hence, British calypso not only reflected the diasporic, postcolonial, and national sensibilities of black postwar migrants in the UK, but also served as an important "trans-Atlantic black political voice during this pivotal era," as noted by historian Joshua Guild (2015:157).

There is a relatively small, but growing literature dedicated to the study of calypso music in Britain (Oliver 1990; Ramnarine 2007; Bradley 2013; Matera 2015; Guild 2015; Spark 2017). This literature is generally split into two based on periodization: interwar and post-WWII. In the interwar period, the musical tours of Caribbean artists in the UK are the principal investigation. Some of the most well-known artists from the Caribbean that made their way to Britain during the first half of the twentieth century and are cited in this literature includes Sam Manning, Lionel Belasco, Ken "Snakeships" Johnson and his West Indian Orchestra, Cyril Blake, and Edric Connor, among others. Scholars who have investigated calypso in the postwar era have focused primarily on early calypso recordings in Britain during the 1950s and '60s. Tina

Ramnarine's *Beautiful Cosmos* (2007) is one of very few works that includes both historic and ethnographic research on calypso in Britain.

In *Beautiful Cosmos*, Ramnarine's research in London's postwar, calypso music scene situates the song genre and music practice not on the fringes of British society as simply the music of the "Other," but rather as a distinct form and strand of "British folk music" itself. Extending the work of ethnomusicologists Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman in *Music and the Racial Imagination* (2000), Ramnarine provides an important critique concerning the constitution of what's deemed "folk music" in the British national imaginary, one that contradicts the premise that English songs that are sung, performed, and recorded by *Englishmen* represent the primordial essence, and only possibility, of what can be considered to be "British folk music." In order to rethink ethnocentric formulations of folk music as practiced and performed among ethnic minority and other racialized groups in European contexts, Ramnarine "*places postcolonial politics in the midst of modern forms of European nationalism*" at the forefront of her investigation (original emphasis, 2007:57). In other words, Ramnarine's research shows how "questioning [existing] musical canons and rewriting imperial narratives" concerning national belonging in Britain allows researchers and scholars of calypso to uncover the ways in which calypso is suspended within a web of "intertwining musical histories," whereby the legacies of "Empire has shaped calypso practice" (64). This orientation opens the possibility for calypso in the UK to be viewed as a British folk music, one that provides a crucial "sense of place" from the perspective of black migrant populations in Britain and serves as a documentation of sorts of "the Empire from within." Considering this framework, I offer an analysis of several early postwar calypso recordings in the UK in order to reveal the role of music in the "making of place," the "set of social, political and material processes by which

people iteratively create and recreate the experienced geographies in which they live" (Pierce et al. 2010).

In 2002, the record label Honest Jon's released its first series of compilation albums featuring early postwar calypso recordings from the 1950s and '60s. Over the next decade (2002-2013), Honest Jon would release another five volumes of calypso music (about 50 calypso songs in total), all recorded within the first two decades following the Second World War; the albums also featured other black music styles recorded in Britain beyond calypso as well, most notably West African highlife. Collectively, the 6-volume compilation series is called *London is the Place for Me*, titled after Lord Kitchener's famous calypso from the *Windrush* in 1948. Four year later (1952), Kitchener would record "London is the Place for Me" with three additional verses added to the original 1948 version, and it would become the first calypso song featured on Honest Jon's compilation series.

During the year the compilation album was first released, Stuart Hall wrote an article for *The Guardian* about the album titled "Calypso Kings," in which he not only celebrated the album, but also presented a brief overview of the importance of British calypso during the *Windrush* years.[46] According to Hall, "shortly after the arrival of the first postwar contingent, calypso music about the migration experience also started to be composed and performed in Britain, *about Britain* (my emphasis)." Additionally, Hall stated that the "calypsos of the 1950s . . . offer[ed] the most telling insights into the early days of the migrant experience," that of "a minority who ha[s] travelled to a strange or strangely familiar place in search of a better life and [is] determined to survive and prosper" (2002). Hall's observations about the links between

[46] Stuart Hall's "Calypso Kings" article for the Guardian be found at the following website: https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2002/jun/28/nottinghillcarnival2002.nottinghillcarnival

calypso and the Caribbean migrant experience are reflected in a number of the recordings in the *London is the Place for Me* series, as well as other similar compilation albums of early calypso in postwar Britain.[47] For example, there are several recordings on these albums that describe the everyday life and struggles of postwar Caribbean migrants living in London/England, including "Life in Britain" by the Mighty Terror, "My Landlady" and "The Underground Train" by Lord Kitchener. There are calypso recordings that reveal sentiments of "homesickness" that many migrants felt as they were adjusting to their new life in the UK. Examples include "Sweet Jamaica" by Lord Kitchener and "No Carnival in Britain" by the Mighty Terror. Still others illuminate how migrants thought about, and dealt with, race relations problems and issues of identity in postwar Britain. Some examples of such recordings include "Mix Up Matrimony" by Lord Beginner, "If You're Not White You're Black" by Lord Kitchener, and "Teddy Boy Calypso" and "Steel Band War" by Lord Invader. Finally, there were even calypsos that chronicled major historic events in the postwar era. Examples include the day when the West Indies cricket team beat England for the first time in 1950 ("Victory Test Match" by Lord Beginner); an account of the 1951 General Election in Britain in which Winston Churchill was again elected Prime Minister ("General Election" by Lord Beginner); the ascension and coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1952/1953 ("The Queen is In" by the Mighty Terror and "I Was There at the Coronation" by Young Tiger); and the decolonization of British colonial territories in Africa ("Birth of Ghana" by Lord Kitchener). These recordings are but a small sample of the range of topics calypsonians in postwar Britain took up as subject matter for their songs, which not only reflected the particular social predicament and circumstances of the local black/Caribbean community, but also documented key historical moments and processes in

[47] See also the album *Calypso War*: *Black Music in Britain*, *1956–1958* for more examples of postwar calypso recordings in Britain.

the making of contemporary Britain.

Although the mass production of calypso recordings in the UK largely faded after the 1960s, the vitality of British calypso still lives on via the popularity of the Notting Hill Carnival and the institutionalization of calypso song competitions during carnival season. In *Calypso in London: 25 Years of the London Calypso Tent* (2017), Stephen Spark provides a crucial history of calypso song competitions in postwar London. This included a calypso competition that is alleged to have taken place in 1957, where the Mighty Terror was crowned Britain's first Calypso Monarch; descriptions of legendary battles between Ashton "Mighty Tiger" Moore and Errol "Lord Cloak" Brown for the British calypso crown throughout the 1970s and '80s; the founding of the Association for British Calypsonians (ABC) in 1991 and subsequent development of the London Calypso Tent in 1992; and 25 years of calypso song competitions hosted by ABC at the Yaa Asantewaa Carnival Arts Centre (1992 – 2007) and The Tabernacle (2008 – present day). Through Spark's research and book, he shows that competition has played a seminal role in the development and promotion of the calypso art form within the cultural landscape of Britain today. The centrality of competition to calypso is also noted by Jocelyne Guilbault in "'Making and Selling Culture': Calypso Music During Carnival" (2005), where, according to Guilbault, the calypso industry "evolved from the particular musical activities, conceptual framework and infrastructure *specific to competitions*," and thus, notions of success in calypso are measured "*more on performance* than on recordings" (my emphasis, 2005:143).

Considering the insights of both Spark and Guilbault, this chapter attempts to advance the study of British calypso through a performance-centered musical ethnography of the preeminent calypso competition in the UK: The London Calypso Tent. In order to analyze calypso performances at the London Calypso Tent and discuss their significance more fully, I draw upon

Arjun Appadurai's writings in *The Social Life of Things* by positing the London Calypso Tent as being a musical "tournament of value" (Appadurai 1986).

As noted in the Introduction Chapter of this dissertation, Appadurai's notion of tournaments of value consists of events that are removed from the everyday routines of economic life in culturally-specific ways and have an "agonistic, romantic, individualistic, and gamelike ethos" as well (50). Such tournaments occur in special areas and are subject to their own rules, where value is not only exchanged through tokens and transformed into other media, but also assigned to participating actors in the tournament according to agreed upon norms and standards (status, rank, fame, reputation, etc.). Additionally, Appadurai also notes that tournaments of value typically accommodate "commoditization by diversion," where the value of the thing in question is increased or enhanced when placed in distinct or perhaps unlikely contexts (1986:28).

Since the publishing of *The Social Life of Things* and the emergence of a theory regarding "tournaments of value," there have been numerous books and articles written that investigate questions of value in relation to a competition or from a framework of competitiveness (Moeran 1993; Meneley 1996; Moeran and Pedersen 2011; Moranz 2014; Rosenstein 2014). With the exception of the Moranz article listed above, the study of music in relation to tournaments of value is scant. In the Moranz 2014 article, his case study is based on a music festival in Vancouver, Canada, where he analyses value primarily through modes of musical consumption by festival attendees. While Moranz provides analyses of the performance contexts at the festival, he does not, however, provide in-depth analyses of the live music acts themselves, which affects how audiences consume the performances, and how value and meaning are assigned to the musical performances as well.

This chapter takes a different approach than the Moranz article, as I am interested in

questions of value as it relates to modes of production rather than consumption alone. Therefore, the focus of the chapter is on the development, structure, and execution of the London Calypso Tent as a tournament of value, which includes ethnographic descriptions of the competition, insights from competitors, backing musicians, and organizers, as well as analyses of several calypso performances between 2013 and 2017. Moreover, as a musically-oriented and culturally-distinct tournament of value, I argue that the musical performances themselves (as sound, expression, communication, staging, and stylized presentation) must be interrogated within the context of the "tournament," alongside its reception by others who take part in the performance beyond the competitors. Here, I am invoking acts of "musicking," coined by Christopher Small, where music is defined as an activity rather than a thing: "To music [musicking] is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (Small 1998:8). Additionally, in his definition of music as an activity, Small also emphasizes that social relationships are created through acts of musicking, and musical meaning is produced as part of the process of establishing those relationships:

> The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and *it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies*. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance (emphasis added, 1998:13).

From this orientation, I explicate the ways in which the framework of competition produces a particular value system for calypso that not only drives musical creativity between competing artists at the London Calypso Tent, but also affects how audience members and appointed judges interpret, evaluate, and respond to calypso performances.

THE LONDON CALYPSO TENT

The London Calypso Tent is the official cultural precursor to the NHC street celebration in London and also one of the most important annual events that promote the development and sustainability of the calypso art form in Britain today. The live music competition was established in 1992 by members of the Association for British Calypsonians, led by Aston "Mighty Tiger" Moore. In a 2006 interview with Ashton Moore conducted by Stephen Spark, Moore stated the following to Spark regarding the development of an annual calypso tent in Britain:

> I didn't want to get involved in the thing, to be honest. I had an easy life [Moore was a bus conductor for London Transport] and I was getting a little calypso work here and there, always being robbed . . . To take on that responsibility, it was a heavy burden. Because I know from my experience in Trinidad trying to run a calypso tent was a heavy job. But I love calypso . . . (Spark 2017:11).

Moore's unwavering love for calypso was a crucial driving force for the establishment of a formal calypso competition in Britain. Thus he, along with several pioneering members of ABC, including Errol Brown (Lord Cloak) and Jeffrey Hinds (De Admiral), founded and produced the London Calypso Tent in 1992. Since then, the competition has been held in the weeks prior to NHC, beginning the first week of August and concluding the Friday before Carnival Sunday. The inaugural London Calypso Tent took place on Friday, August 7, 1992 at the Yaa Asantewaa Carnival Arts Centre in West London (Figure 4.1). The London Calypso Tent would continue to take place at the Yaa Centre for another 15 years before moving to its new and current location in 2008, The Tabernacle.



Figure 4.1 – Flyer of the inaugural London Calypso Tent, 1992

In recent years, the ABC has transformed from operating primarily as a club, and is now a registered non-profit organization that has charitable and company status, being formally recognized as The Association of Calypsonians UK Limited (ACUK). The organization is membership-led and is currently managed by a team of seven individuals: a chairman (Vincent John), three calypsonians, and three non-performers. The primary objectives of ABC/ACUK are to promote the cultivation of calypso music and spread knowledge about the cultural history of the art form in the Caribbean, UK, and across Europe. This is largely achieved through the facilitation of a number of training workshops, carnival events, and annual competitions dedicated to the promotion of calypso music (e.g., The London Calypso Tent). A residual effect

of the production of these calypso-based events is that they have become a crucial means for fostering musical sustainability and the preservation of the art form, especially the annual London Calypso Tent. As part of their preservation endeavors, the ABC/ACUK organization is also currently building a virtual heritage museum and archive that is dedicated to British calypso, which will be accessible to the public via the Internet in the near future. This is being done in collaboration with the London Metropolitan Archives organization, notable journalists with deep knowledge of calypso and its history in the UK (such as Stephen Spark of *Soca News*), a website designer and curator (Tony Thomas), and other researchers, including myself, who are donating materials to the virtual museum.[48] Once completed, the site will feature information about ABC/ACUK and its members, a range of artifacts like event flyers, albums, and photos, video and audio recordings of calypso performances over the years, and testimonials from audience/community members who have consistently supported British calypso, ABC/ACUK, and the London Calypso Tent.

Since its founding in 1991, the membership of ABC/ACUK has steadily grown over years and now includes approximately 25 performers. With the passing of Ashton "Mighty Tiger" Moore in 2017, there are now only two remaining founding members of ABC who continue to participate in the London Calypso Tent every year (Lord Cloak and D Admiral). Nearly 100% of ABC/ACUK members are black and of Caribbean heritage. Some were born in the various islands of the Caribbean (Trinidad, Anguilla, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Guyana, for example) and others were born in the UK to Caribbean parents. The only non-black member of ABC/ACUK to date is Muffin Man, a white English singer-songwriter, who joined

[48] So far, I have donated three audio recordings of the London Calypso Tent final competition (2015-17), and 22 video clips of performances at the 2017 London Calypso Tent final competition. I also intend to donate several dozen photos I have taken of calypso performances at the Tent dating back to 2013.

the organization in 2017. The membership is also predominately male and middle-aged (45) or older, and none of the members perform calypso full-time in Britain for a living.

Calypso artists have joined the ABC/ACUK for a variety of reasons over the years, though economic reasons tend not to factor in, as performing calypso in the UK is not a financially-lucrative endeavor. In a 2013 interview with calypsonian Alexander D Great, he informed me that he was drawn to calypso because of his admiration for protest music that "told it like it was." He stated that "calypso fulfilled the continuation of that idea," though he realized he was never going to make big money as a calypsonian. While gigging at an arts center in Branchford, England in 1996, he was approached by the founding members of ABC and they convinced him to join the "calypso fraternity" that year.

In a 2018 email correspondence with Alex, he shared with me that the "London Calypso Tent is the most important institution for contemporary British calypso because without it hardly any concentration of calypso talent would gather to present its topical and relevant songs in this genre" (2018). Additionally, he told me his attraction to the Tent was also due to it being a "forum for explicit truths, unimpeded by conventional ways of conveying information," and so he "use[s] the Tent to invite people to consider various aspects of life from a viewpoint that is quite different from the normally accepted ways of thinking" (i.e., consuming information presented in mainstream media). Thus, many of his calypsos are written as a reaction to something that has either impressed or angered him, he told me. And he uses his calypsos to spread awareness, instruct, and educate his listeners about various topics and socio-political issues that has captured his attention and are important to him.

James Walker, who goes by the stage name of Santiago, is a more recent addition to ABC/ACUK, having joined the organization in 2013. In my interview with Santiago in 2017, his

journey to calypso and the Tent was quite different from Alex's. Santiago was a sojourner of sorts, having lived in multiple places and taken up calypso wherever he was because he enjoyed the experience of performing the music, especially humorous calypsos.

> I used to work for BP [gas company] in Trinidad. They had like a calypso competition at carnival. And then there was calypso from different companies involved, like Shell and all the other ones. And I would just sing the funny ones. Everyone loved the funny shit and they . . . I used to win like a lot of cash so it would pay for carnival and it was really good. Two years of making lots of money singing these songs that everybody was really enjoying it. And I enjoyed that experience. Then I moved to Houston and there is not that much Caribbean culture necessarily going on in Houston. Maybe more now, but maybe not that much then. Once I moved to London, I found out that there was a tent. I wanted to get involved in that, and I kind of kicked back into the calypso . . . getting involved in calypso, and writing calypso, and stuff like that. So that's kind of like my journey.

After he shared his journey with me, I asked Santiago what calypso means to him. He responded by stating the following:

> Calypso is a genre of Caribbean music that has some important roots in the histories of the Caribbean. To me, I don't . . . I'm not able to codify or define calypso from the more technical aspects of the music itself. But I do identify calypso with the theme of telling a story, telling a story either through humor or some form of satire, through some form of dramatization. A music that tells the story. A music that connects with people, that goes beyond the melody, that requires a little bit of patience to listen to it and to feel it.
>
> I kind of idealize it [calypso] because it has a little bit of a higher purpose than pure entertainment. That's how I kind of view calypso. That's why I . . . it has meaning to me because I see it as something that does a little bit of transf . . . it transforms me. Or does a little bit of communication. Does a little bit of propaganda that maybe other types of music wouldn't always achieve, or always get to that level (Santiago 2017).

While Alex states that he uses his calypsos in the Tent to invite people to "consider various aspects of life from a viewpoint that is quite different from the normally accepted ways of thinking," Santiago evokes a similar sentiment when he asserts that calypso has a "higher purpose than entertainment" and does a "little bit of propaganda." In both cases, the artists's statements are pointing to the particular ways that calypso provides them a platform to present their interests, beliefs, and worldviews to a listening public. In other words, calypso enables them to use the Tent as a medium for the performance of their values.

Additionally, the "higher purpose" that calypso is alleged to serve, as insinuated by Santiago, is also informed by the ways that the musical tradition is aestheticized and revered by artists and other calypso enthusiasts alike. This is enhanced by the nature of competition, where, according to Jocelyne Guilbault, the specific framework of competition that encompasses the production of calypso tents has "fostered not only a particular terminology and particular kinds of discourses, but also specific activities, institutions, knowledges, alliances, histories, sensibilities, hopes, and frustrations" (2007:72). Guilbault's insights illuminate that tent competitions are situated within distinct social and cultural regimes of value that affects how calypso is perceived, framed, discussed, understood, performed, and attributed meaning by carnivalists and calypso aficionados. As a result of these processes of meaning-making and signification, a particular criterion has been established in tent competitions for not only interpreting, judging, and measuring calypso performances, but also distinguishing exceptional performances from ordinary ones. This will be illustrated in the pages that follow, which consists of a musical ethnography of the contemporary London Calypso Tent and its annual production during carnival season.

Calypso Competition at The Tabernacle

The Tabernacle is a beautiful, multi-level red-brick building that is located in the heart of the Notting Hill community and is over 100 years old. It is one of London's premier sites for carnival arts and showcases today, and one of two central venues of "Carnival Village Trust," along with the Yaa Centre. In addition to housing the Tent, The Tabernacle also operates as a restaurant, masquerade camp, and the rehearsal grounds of Mangrove Steelband (Figure 4.2). As a result, The Tabernacle is teeming with carnival-related activities and productions all-year round, with the NHC season being the apex of such activities.



Figure 4.2 – Sign posted on The Tabernacle entry door

The first time I attended the London Calypso Tent was August 2013. I learned of the event after attending a film showing at The Tabernacle a few weeks prior based on the life of famed calypsonian Black Stalin (Leroy Calliste). The title of the film was *Come With it, Black Man: A Biography of Black Stalin's Consciousness*, directed by Tamara Tam-Cruickshank (2012). After the film concluded, I stayed around for nearly an hour talking to attendees about different Caribbean musical events that were taking place in London, and the Tent came up as a recommended event to attend. I was informed that it would be taking place at The Tabernacle as well, so I planned to check it out. And every year since 2013 (with the exception of 2014), I have attended the London Calypso Tent consistently, documenting the competition each year through photography and audio/visual recordings.

To enter The Tabernacle, you have to proceed through the courtyard just beyond the black entryway gates (Figure 4.3). The courtyard is filled with tables, benches, and chairs that provide outdoor seating for patrons, as well as carnival sculpture art designed by Carl Gabriel. On the nights of the Tent, virtually all the tables are full of people and a line is formed from the gate to the door for those that need to purchase/pick up tickets for the event.



Figure 4.3 – Outside the main entrance of The Tabernacle

There are three levels to The Tabernacle, though most people only occupy the ground-level and the theatre, which is on the second floor. The ground-level consists of three separate entities: a dine-in restaurant with a full bar and kitchen; the official office of Carnival Village Trust, and the workstation/panyard of Mangrove mas band and steelband. As you make your into the lobby area, you will notice a ton of advertising and promotional materials, consisting namely of flyers for upcoming events, and mounted pictures of carnival pioneers and revelers at NHC through the years. Additionally, there is a steel-wired sculpture of a pan man, which was also designed by Carl Gabriel, a plaque on the wall honoring the late Claudia Jones for founding Britain's Carnival Movement in the late 1950s (Figure 4.4), and a glass display room showcasing the latest Notting Hill Carnival costumes of Mangrove masquerade band.

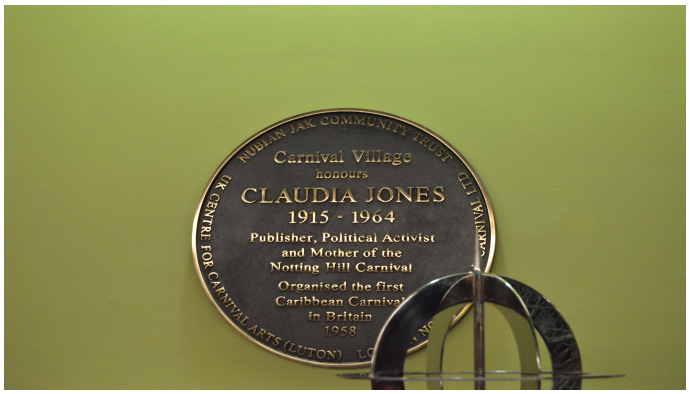


Figure 4.4 – Plaque honoring Claudia Jones at the Tabernacle

In order to gain access to the calypso competition, tickets can be purchased online in advance of the show or at the door. The price of admission is £12 per night for general guests, and £10 for students. After tickets have been sold or claimed, patrons are stamped on the inside portion of their wrist, which must be presented to security at the entrance of the second-floor auditorium for admittance. The theatre opens to guest at 7:30pm and the calypso competition showcase starts at 8pm.

I generally arrive at The Tabernacle 1-2 hours before the event starts to observe set up and other logistical operations that transpire before the actual competition begins. "Uncle" Tony and "Aunty" Merle Blondell are almost always there by that time, as they are typically among the first people to arrive for Tent night and among the last to leave consistently. Uncle Tony is charged with managing ticket sales and distribution each night of the Tent, while Aunty Merle is the Event Manager for the Tent. Despite being completely swamped with responsibilities, as she can regularly be seen darting back and forth between the auditorium, front desk, and business office during the four-week competition, Aunty Merle always stops what she is doing momentarily to warmly welcome me back to the Tent with a hug and kiss. Then, just as soon as she comes to me, she is off again to resume her duties. At around 5/5:30pm, competing calypso artists, band members, and back-up singers begin to arrive for sound check. Upon arrival, each competing calypsonian receives a wristband from Uncle Tony so that security can appropriately identify them as performers when they eventually make their way to the theatre.

To access the theatre, one must ascend a long flight of stairs—an elevator is also available for patrons with disabilities. At the top of the stairs, performers and patrons alike are met by security checking for wristbands and entry stamps before being allowed to enter the theatre. Inside The Tabernacle theatre, there is a wooden stage located at the front of the room

with a large projector screen hanging in the background displaying promotional information for ABC and the Tent (Figure 4.5). During the show, competitors usually have a slide show presentation with curated images and texts projected onto the screen that coincides with their performance.



Figure 4.5 – Inside The Tabernacle theatre, screenshot image from official website

The theatre has collapsible seating for about 120 people. However, during the Tent, overflow seating is made available for guests. The stage crew usually set up three additional rows on the floor level and several benches on all sides of the upper-level of the theatre to accommodate the excess of patrons. In total, about 200 people can sit comfortably in the theatre with the overflow seating. On the busiest days of the Tent, another 50 or so people are usually standing in the theatre to view the show.

In addition to the stage and seating areas, there are also several theatre lights hanging overhead and an in-house speaker system, both of which are controlled by the theatre technicians. They have their own workstation, which is located above the auditorium and can only be accessed via the third level of the building. In 2013, I was permitted inside the theatre pre-competition and allowed to shadow the tech crew as they set up. I asked one of the crew members about their tech responsibilities and was informed that they generally have free reign to

be creative in terms of stage lighting during performances, unless the performer has specific instructions or cues.

During competition nights, I typically sit in the same seat every time I attend the Tent (last row, dead center). This allows me a wide range view of the action of the Tent, on stage and within the audience. In addition to myself, there is also a professional crew that regularly covers the Tent. The crew works for *Soca News* and is led by journalist Stephen Spark. Coverage of the Tent beyond us is practically non-existent, as mainstream British news outlets do not cover the London Calypso Tent, and the competition is not live broadcasted on British TV or radio either.

The audience for the London Calypso Tent contrasts significantly from the majority population of people that attend the NHC street festival. While the carnival crowd consists of mostly young white people between the ages of 16 and 35, the Tent crowd is almost entirely made up of black, middle-aged men and women of Caribbean heritage. The crowd size ebbs and flows over the course of the four-week competition, with the Soca Monarch and Calypso Monarch Finals having the highest attendance. By and large, the majority of people who attend the London Calypso Tent can be considered "Tent regulars." These include people like Cyril Khamai (steel pan pioneer in both Trinidad and Britain), Sister Monica Twang (nun, nurse, and children's masquerade maker), and Alison Williams (British masquerade pioneer) who are all ardent calypso enthusiasts and have participated/supported carnival arts in London for decades (Figure 4.6). In addition to the "regulars," there are a number of esteemed guests that attend the Tent as well, including the RBKC mayor and High Commissioners from several Caribbean islands.



Figure 4.6 – Photo of Sister Monica at the London Calypso Tent, 2015

In general, the presence of young people in the audience at the London Calypso Tent is extremely rare. I am often the youngest audience member present during the calypso competition. This trend is not particular to the London scene (I am told), but is reflective of the current state of calypso more generally. Older audiences tend to be drawn to calypso music today more so than younger ones, and this has raised concerns among those invested in the longevity of the art form. When I asked the chairman of ABC/ACUK about the demographics of the Tent and why the crowd consisted mostly of older patrons, Vincent responded with the following:

> They're [the older crowd] the ones who remember what calypso is all about. So the ABC has a task, and that task is to spread the calypso music and what it's about. Because in the current climate, people have so many different genres of music, whether it's grime or soca, different genres. And young people are probably more likely to listen to grime because of the lyrics even if the calypso message is the same. The perception [among young people] is that calypso lie in the '50s, not calypso 2017. So one of the things that we did is introduce the Groovy Soca competition. So groovy soca is the halfway house between power soca and calypso. And the majority of the people who perform are the younger people. So then we hope to get a younger audience involved (Vincent John 2017).

In many ways, the projected "sense of loss" or the idea that calypso is in danger of "dying out" has been the impetus for the expansion of the Tent's operations, culminating in new strategies implemented by the ABC/ACUK Executive Committee to draw more young people to the Tent as audience members, participants, and competitors. As a result of these changes to the format of the London Calypso Tent, Soca night creates a recognizable demographic change in the audience in terms of age, where more young people are present than any other night of the Tent. While

this is seen as a step in the "right" direction, Vincent made clear to me that more needed to be done, especially in the realm of calypso.

> One of the objectives is attracting more younger singers. How we can actually get that off the ground because we may have more younger singers taking part in the groovy soca, but not many in calypso. So we need to think, are we going to lose the art form if we don't encourage them to take it up? (Vincent John 2017).

In the future, ABC/ACUK is looking to also re-introduce the Junior Calypso Monarch competition in order to groom more young people to become calypsonians, thereby ensuring that the calypso tradition survives in the generations to come.

Competition Format, Judging Criteria, and Performance Requirements

The general format of the London Calypso Tent consists of the following events: 1) an opening night showcase, 2) first night of competition (semi-finals), 3) Groovy Soca competition, and 4) finals week competitions (Calypso Monarch Finals and People's Choice). The opening night showcase takes place on the first Friday of August every year, and functions as a basic introduction to ABC/ACUK, the competing musicians, and an overview of things to come at the Tent during the four-week competition. The following week, the formal calypso competition begins and features about 10-12 performers. Each calypsonian prepares 1-2 songs that will be judged during the competition. In general, most of the performers choose a seemingly "safe" song to perform that they believe is "good enough" to get them through the semifinals, and they save their best work for the final competition showcase in week four. The third week of the Tent is dedicated to soca and features a competition between about six artists. The last week of the competition is the Calypso Monarch Finals and People's Choice competition, and they are held the Thursday and Friday before the NHC street festival. Overall, the Calypso Monarch Finals competition is the best-attended night of the Tent and almost always sells out.

While an economic transaction grants individuals entry and access to live calypso

performances at the Tent, it is important to highlight that the Tent itself is also produced within a particular socially- and culturally-constituted value regime that gives meaning to calypso music and calypso performances. The value of calypso in such a context is not so much rooted in its commoditization, but rather in the cultural meaning and significance that is attributed to the performance of calypso in the Tent setting. This can be seen as emblematic of what Appadurai refers to as "commodization by diversion," where the value of live calypso performance, as an esteemed commodity, is enhanced as a result of the context in which it is taking place (e.g., the calypso tent competition).

As a distinct musical tradition that is rooted in the cultural and political histories of the Caribbean and its people across the diaspora, calypso has its own unique features and sensibilities, as well as musical structure, form, and aesthetics. During Tent competitions, the staged presentations are judged, scored, and ranked based on socially and culturally constructed values about calypso, in accordance with established performance standards for the music. This value system for marking calypso performances with distinction is upheld by audience members and judges who have been appointed to evaluate, measure, and rank every calypso performance at the Tent using an agreed upon rubric. Thus, to win in this tournament of value, the calypsonian must appeal to the sensibilities of the audience and appointed judges in particular ways, as I will show below.

In London's carnival scene, calypso is viewed as an esteemed carnival art form that is closely associated with Caribbean grassroots folklore, reflects the daily lives of Caribbean and black British people, and links popular culture with social and political commentary on a variety of issues. The rendition of calypsos at the Tent takes the form of verbal and musical story-telling, where originality, lyrical content, vocal clarity, and delivery are held in high regard in

evaluations of live calypso performances. As a result, forgetting/stumbling through lyrics, singing off key, or getting out of sync with the established rhythmic groove during the performance of the calypso can all negatively affect the reception of the piece and be detrimental to its scoring potential.

As topical songs, calypsos address serious and humorous matters, as well as historical events and current affairs. The effective calypso in the Tent competition is one that is timely and connects with the audience in particularly meaningful ways. They are written and performed to be engaging and interactive, and/or consist of topics that people can relate to and identify with. For the Tent audience then, relevancy of the topic and familiarity with the ideas and material presented in the calypso helps audience members to better connect with the piece. Additionally, calypsonians often include lyrics or musical passages that are easy to remember, or they strategically employ punch-lines within the song that reinforce the main idea of the calypso. These are typically located at either the end of lines in the verses or within the choruses, allowing audiences to catch on to the heart of the calypso more easily and even sing along when the punch-lines and choruses are repeated.

Finally, the strongest calypsos at the Tent are those whose lyrics and ideas are communicated effectively to the audience, while also having some transformative effect on audience members, whether it alters mood, energy, or raise consciousness about an issue or set of issues that are relevant to audience members in some way. These pieces are not only highly entertaining, but also oftentimes educational. When audience members approve of particular calypsos that appeal to their artistic, social, and political sensibilities, and they want to mark it with distinction, they shower the calypsonian with a rousing applause and praise the performance

by shouting out "kaiso! kaiso! kaiso" at the conclusion of the piece.[49] When I asked one of the competing calypso members about the use of the term "kaiso" in the Tent setting, he stated that it means "you know when it's right. It hits the spot. The lyrics hit the spot and you go, 'Yea! He's right!' Kaiso just means, yeah, more of that! Brilliant! Fantastic! It's shouted out" (Alexander D Great 2013).

Every performance at the London Calypso Tent is judged by a group of officials who were appointed by the ABC board months in advance of the actual competition. Each judge is approached and independently selected based on their qualifications. For instance, it is required that every judge that is considered for the Tent competition is, or has been, involved in calypso or related musics (such as soca) either as a producer, manager, writer, or artist. The purpose is to ensure that judges have a wealth of experience with the art form and can bring those experiences to bear on their ability to judge the competition. In total, three to four judges are selected every year for the London Calypso Tent. Examples of individuals who have been selected as judges for the London Calypso Tent between 2013 and 2017 include legendary soca DJ Martin Jay, musicologist Ava Hutchinson, and Professor June Guichard Pine.

During the competition, Tent judges use a standardized rubric system that consists of five categories for scoring calypso performances: 1) lyrical content; 2) originality; 3) music; 4) rendition; and 5) stage presentation (see Table 2.1). **Lyrical content** includes the song's lyrics, message transmitted and how they are constructed. **Originality** includes the subject matter, chosen topic, content and the rhythm/riddim. **Music** includes the melody, arrangement, flow, and catchiness of the song. **Rendition** includes vocal delivery, clarity, and interpretation of the song.

[49] In the discourse on calypso, "kaiso" has two meanings. First, it is an older term that was used to refer to calypso music more generally. Second, in the context of performance, "kaiso" is shouted among audience members as way of giving praise to the performer and a particular calypso performance.

Stage presentation includes introduction, conduciveness of costume/attire, showmanship, command of the stage, confidence, audience engagement, and response. A select number of points are allocated for every category of the performance by the competition judges, ranked from poor (lowest score) to excellent (highest score).

No.	Category	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
1	*Lyrical Content*	1-10	11-15	16-20	21-25
2	*Originality*	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
3	*Music*	1-10	11-15	16-20	21-25
4	*Rendition*	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
5	*Stage Presentation*	1-3	4-5	6-7	8-10

Table 2.1 – Calypso Song Elements and Scoring
Source: ABC/ACUK

After each judge allocates points for every calypso performance, the points are later added together at the conclusion of the competition to produce a final score and ranking for all of the performances. The judges' station in the theatre is located at an elevated level behind the audience, directly center stage. This gives them a great vantage point of the musical performances and various crowd reactions throughout the night.

Guest artists perform during the second half of the show in order to provide more entertainment for the audience, and to give the competition judges adequate time for tallying up the scores of each performer and ranking the performances. Some of the guest artists that have performed at the Tent over the years include Socrates (St. Kitts and Nevis), the legendary Hendrickson family (Trinidad and Tobago), Tobago Crusoe (UK), and Macomere FiFi (the 5-time winner of the Toronto Calypso Tent). Raffle prizes are also awarded to audience members who purchased tickets in advance of the drawing, creating a more dynamic and interactive Tent experience for guests. The competition formally concludes with scoring announcements, the awarding of two runner-up trophies for the 2nd and 3rd place contestants, and finally, the crowning of the 1st place Calypso Monarch.

In order to be eligible for the Calypso Monarch title, all competing calypsonians at the Tent must perform an original work with an accompanying band and back up singers. One of the primary reasons why competing calypsonians are required to perform with a live band, as opposed to a backing track, is because they must showcase their dexterity, stage presence, listening skills, and overall ability to be entertaining. This was conveyed to me in a personal interview with Vincent John (2017). Additionally, all performing artists are required to arrive at the Tent early for sound check with the resident band and receive a £100 appearance fee for every night they perform during the Tent. If they fail to arrive on time for sound check, then they cannot perform and they also do not get paid. So a great level of professionalism is expected of calypsonians who desire to perform and compete in the London Calypso Tent.

Calypso competitors are backed by the ABC All Stars (resident house band) and The Divettes (backing vocalists) throughout the duration of the Tent. The ABC All Stars are comprised of eight musicians in total: the bandleader on keyboard, a three-piece horn section (saxophone, trumpet, and trombone), a bass guitarist and an electric guitarist, and finally, a drummer and an additional percussionist playing the congas. One thing that is really important to acknowledge is that the ABC All Stars are not just a random collection of musicians who happen to play well together. While some of them have extensive training in music theory and performance, many of them also have deep cultural knowledge of calypso, as well as a wealth of experience performing behind calypsonians in the UK and throughout the Caribbean. In addition to the house band, competitors at the London Calypso Tent are also accompanied by three female vocalists: Michelle Cross-Glasgow (soprano), Geraldine Reid (melody/alto), and Carlene McLean (tenor/bass). These women are known as The Divettes. The Divettes are a trio that performs and records calypso, soul, reggae, and pop music styles, and they have also been the

resident backing vocalists at the London Calypso Tent since the early 2000s. Collectively, the ABC band and Divettes are integral components to the production of the London Calypso Tent. They provide an extraordinarily polished and professional sound to the calypsos, and without them, the quality of the musical material and the competition itself would not be as high as it is today.

Every year, the resident band and backing vocalists work alongside each calypsonian in the development of their competition songs. The process always begins with the calypsonian writing the lyrics and recording the melodies to their own songs. These are then sent to a musical arranger, who is more often than not the keyboardist and bandleader for the ABC All Stars (Shawn Marcellin). After receiving the recordings, Shawn creates the harmonic structure to coincide with the melodies of the songs and arranges the parts for each band member. The Divettes also receive recordings of the melodies so that they are able to make proper backing vocals to accompany each song. Generally speaking, these recordings are sent to the band and Divettes about six weeks in advance of the first acoustic rehearsal, with rehearsals beginning about a month and half before the opening night show (mid-late June). These rehearsals typically take place over the weekends, where each calypsonian sign up for a slot and come in for an hour to go over the song(s) with both the band and Divettes. Though the rehearsals have to go through an expedited process due to funding shortages, the pre-Tent rehearsals are necessary to ensure that all parties feel comfortable with the songs in time for the competition and that the overall quality of performances at the Tent is of a high standard.

During rehearsals, several negotiations are made between the calypsonian, band, and Divettes to make each individual song/performance as strong as possible. Sometimes the calypsonian comes to the rehearsal knowing exactly what he/she wants in terms of the musical

direction of the piece; sometimes they come with just the general concept of the piece (the "bare bones," as put by one of my informants). In the case of the latter, the band and backing vocalists often provide calypsonians with additional musical advice to assist in developing the song/performance. This includes, but is not limited to, establishing the proper tempo and rhythmical feel for the piece, the appropriate key for the calypsonian to sing in, and adding musical embellishments in different places to enhance the songs. According to Carlene McLean, one of The Divettes, the contributions of the band and backing vocalists not only "add flesh to the bones," but also add "more seasonings" and "more flavor" to the music so that the calypsos are musically coherent, cohesive, and potentially more enjoyable for an audience (McLean 2017). During my interview with Alexander D Great, he also noted the significant contributions that the Divettes and ABC All Stars make to the overall quality of calypso performances at the London Calypso Tent. In his own words, he stated the following:

> We have the best vocalist in the world. Alexander D Great says so. You heard it here. I don't mind who takes me to task. They're absolutely fabulous. They are the glittering icing on our cake because when they open their mouths and sing, and you've got the sound right, they just enhance everybody. You can be a lousy singer, with no voice at all. When those girls come in on your chorus, you sound like a million dollars. They make you sound good. We also have a great band. It's tight, beautiful playing. It's as good as any other band (Alexander D Great 2013).

After all the preparation and rehearsal labor is done, it is then solely up to the individual calypsonian to deliver a high-level performance of their piece in the quest to be crowned Calypso King or Queen for the season.

There are several prizes available for calypso and soca competitors at the London Calypso Tent. The first place calypso winner of the Tent receives £500, a bottle of rum, and a subsidy of another £500 for travel to the Caribbean or Canada to appear as a guest artist in their calypso tents. The second place prize is £300 and a bottle of rum, and the third place winner receives £200. So, if an artist makes it to the Final competition, they would have received at least

£300 for performing during opening night, the semi-finals, and finals, with the chance of winning up to an additional £500 by placing 1st through 3rd in the Finals competition. Each prize also comes with the awarding of a trophy. A similar structure is in place for the Groovy Soca competition, where those who place receive a cash prize, in addition to trophies. The first place prize for the soca competition is £300, second place is £200, and third place is £100.

CALYPSO CONTESTANTS AND THE PERFORMANCE OF VALUES AT THE LONDON CALYPSO TENT, 2013-17

Since 2013, I've witnessed over 100 performances of calypso at the London Calypso Tent competition by 18 contestants. A profile of calypso tent performers can be found on the Association for British Calypsonians official website.[50] The overwhelming majority of competitors that I have seen perform at the Tent are male, reflecting the male-dominated membership of ABC/ACUK. Of the 18 contestants that have competed on the Tent stage between 2013 and 2017, only 5 have been women (Helena B, Brown Sugar, Cleopatra, Giselle, and Nikisha). The subject matter of calypso songs performed at the Tent varied widely, ranging from songs about dancing and pleasure to tribute pieces and songs that provide commentary on domestic and international social injustices.

Recall that David Graeber and Michael Lambek have argued that "value" can be understood as *actions* that become meaningful to social actors (Graeber 2001, 2013; Lambek 2013; 2015). The openness of their theorization of value suggests that it can be applied to a wide range of activities that people engage in, including musical ones. Considering this, Christopher Small's concept of "musicking," which foregrounds various processes related to music (e.g., *act*s of producing, listening, and responding to music) can also be generative of value as well.

[50] ABC official website. http://www.britishcalypsonians.com/our-artistes.php

Applying Graeber and Lambek's action-centered approach to value and Small's concept of musicking to the physical, social, and cultural dynamics of the London Calypso Tent allow for an interpretation of the competition pieces to be read as the *performance of values*, which are presented in the form of artful narratives that are sung and dramatized.

Calypso artists perform material content that reflects their beliefs and world views, and ultimately, the things that matters to them, whether it concerns the joys of having a good time, the need to speak out against some atrocity, the importance of black history in Britain and beyond, the inequalities that women face in private and public spaces, etc. Thus, insights into their "values" can be seen in the songs that they choose to write, what they choose to enter into competition, and what they choose to perform for a live audience. For example, Dave B (Dave Batson), who is of Barbadian descent, entered and performed a piece called "Barbados" at the 2016 London Calypso Tent. One of the reasons this is significant to note is because 2016 marked the 50th year of independence for the island of Barbados, resulting in celebrations on the island and among Bajan communities abroad. His choice to perform a piece at the London Calypso Tent that celebrated this historical occasion for Barbadians the world over in 2016 serves as an illustration that patriotism and national pride was something that was particularly meaningful to him that year. Another example can be seen in Rev B's (Berth Browne) 2017 song entry entitled, "Stop D Killing." In a year marked by several terrorist attacks in Britain (the Manchester Bombing and the London Bridge Attack among them), Rev B wrote and performed a calypso pleading for the end of the senseless murder of innocent civilians in the UK and around the world at the hands of terrorists. Though dramatically different in tone, in comparison to Dave B's "Barbados," "Stop D Killing" highlights the values Rev B wanted to share with the public in 2017, which was grounded in an ideology of anti-terrorism.

Additionally, as shared earlier in this chapter, when audience members relate to material presented in a calypso and want to mark it with distinction, they shout "kaiso!" Therefore, just as the staged presentations at the Tent can be seen as demonstrative of a calypsonian's values, audience responses to the performances and the evaluations of them made by appointed judges also shed light on the degree of (potentially) shared and contested values between competitors, audience, and officiants. A list of all songs entered for competition at the London Calypso Tent between 2015 and 2017, including those that placed 1st through 3rd, can be seen in Table 3 (page 201). In the section that follows, I explore the performance of values at the London Calypso Tent in greater detail by providing ethnographic analyses of several calypso performances that took place between 2013 and 2017.

Each calypsonian in the Tent has his/her own presentational style for performance. For example, Dansa (William O'Garro), as his name suggests, has performed several kaisos where dancing is foundational to his performance. Despite being an older gentleman, he is still a very active dance instructor and choreographer in the London scene. On the Tent stage, Dansa's stage presence is almost always front and center, and when he "wind," "push back," and spin on stage with his fancy footwork, Dansa almost always receives rousing responses from the entertained audience. Another calypsonian who tends to be a crowd pleaser at the Tent is Musicman (Michael Nanton). While his dance moves may not be as "flashy" as Dansa, he also has an eccentric performance style. With long, flowing locked hair and typically dressed in bright colors, Musicman brings a fire and passion to the stage that is shrouded in a Rastafarian ethos. Unlike his counterparts in the Tent, Musicman often performs his conscious pieces in the style of raggamuffin rather than traditional calypso.

In contrast to the more eccentric styles of performance that are exhibited at the Tent,

there are several artists who tend to perform in a more conservative style that is largely stationary, with minimal or no use of props. These include individuals such as Clivus (Clive Lewis), Dave B (Dave Batson), and De Admiral (Jeffrey Hinds). Among these artists, emphasis tend be placed on song lyrics rather than theatrics. De Admiral, in particular, has developed the persona of being seen as "the gentleman of ABC" over the years. As one of the founding members of the organization and earliest performers in the London Calypso Tent, he is a true veteran of London calypso. During the 2017 calypso season, he performed two pieces that was about honor and legacy. One of the pieces was composed by the late Mighty Tiger (Ashton Moore) entitled "Hush Little Birdie," a tribute to Moore's life and contributions to British calypso, and "Our Father's Dey," a calypso competition piece that serves as a call to fathers everywhere to assume their duty in child rearing and be better role models for future generations. As has become customary with De Admiral, he typically performs his calypsos while wearing a suit, tie, and hat. And at the end of his performances, he always removes his hat and bows graciously before the crowd before he takes his exit. His "Father's Dey" presentation in 2017 was no different, except for this time, he brought his son on stage with him to honor three generations of Hinds men (Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7 – De Admiral performing at the London Calypso Tent, 2017

Women calypsonians are undoubtedly the songbirds of ABC. While not discrediting the singing capabilities of the men, ABC women are all above-average singers and almost always sing with excellent diction and vocal clarity. Moreover, they have collectively rendered some of the most powerful songs that have been featured at the Tent in recent years. Two examples include "The Power is Yours" (2013) and "Together" (2015), both by Nikisha (Nikisha Reyes-Pile). The latter song is a dedication to community-building and the power of teamwork, as she emphatically sings in the song's chorus: "Together / we can aspire. / Together / we can achieve. / Together / we can rebuild our future. / Together / in unity."

Finally, there are always performances at the Tent that come up short in terms of winning the Monarch title, but are memorable nonetheless. While there have been several such performances that are noteworthy, I will focus on a few by three artists in particular: Lord Cloak (Errol Brown), Alexander D Great (Alexander Loewenthal), and Santiago (James Walker).

Lord Cloak is by far and away "The Veteran" par excellence of calypso in the London scene. He is also the winningest calypsonian in the history of the London Calypso Tent (1992-present), having won the title eight times, including a record six in row between 1992 and 1997. Needless to say, Lord Cloak has had countless memorable performances over the years, even at times when he did not win the Crown—he has not been crowned Calypso Monarch in over 15 years (2002). I first saw Lord Cloak perform at the London Calypso Tent in 2013, with a piece called "The Money Tree." Dressed in an all-black suit with a clergy collar and small branch in his hand, Lord Cloak sang his 2013 composition just in front of the audience on the floor instead of on stage like the other calypsonians typically do. The piece talked about how members of his family back in Trinidad think just because he lives in London, he possesses lots of money. The absurdity of it all, as Lord Cloak explains in the calypso, drives him mad. This was the first

calypso performance I witnessed where the entire audience was singing along to the chorus, not only because it was catchy and simple enough, but many of the audience members (who were mostly middle-aged or older) seem to have experienced similar things with their overseas families as well. In 2015, Lord Cloak would sing another memorable calypso entitled "People to Remember." The song opened up with Lord Cloak standing solemnly with his hat in hand, as the trumpet player played the "taps" bugle call on his horn (Figure 4.8).



Figure 4.8 – Lord Cloak performing at the London Calypso Tent, 2016

After the bugle and introduction, Lord Cloak climbed his way down to the audience (as per usual) and sang his dedication piece to the pioneers of London's carnival, citing trailblazing figures such as Lawrence Noel (veteran carnival bandleader) and Selwyne Baptiste (UK steelband pioneer) within his calypso.

In addition to Lord Cloak, Alexander D Great is another calypsonian who has had several memorable performances at the London Calypso Tent beyond his winning kaisos in 2010 and 2011 respectively. Perhaps more so than any other calypsonian at the London Calypso Tent, Alex regularly performs in ways that can be considered to be "outside the box." He is not afraid to be daring, to try new things, or be unconventional. In 2013, he entered two songs into competition at the Tent: "Amandla Mandela" and "History of Carnival." The first piece, as indicated by the title, is an ode to the great Nelson Mandela. During the piece, Alex had dancers perform a choreographed routine while he sang on stage. This was the first calypso performance

I witnessed at the Tent that had outside dancers contribute to the presentation (Figure 4.9).



Figure 4.9 – Alexander D Great and dancers perform at the London Calypso Tent, 2013

In "History of Carnival," Alex chronicles the development of carnival in Trinidad from the pre-emancipation period to its modern-day practice, and also connects its historical development to carnival practices throughout the Caribbean diaspora, including the Notting Hill Carnival. During the choruses of the calypso, Alex declares that "carnival history must not be a mystery," and that "it should be there for us all to see." This idea is then reinforced in each verse, which documents the various structural and cultural changes to carnival that has happened since the emancipation of enslaved Africans in the New World. Coinciding with this, he also charges historians and calypsonians alike to "be sure to protect the past and teach the children so this thing will last," referring to both carnival and its history.

In addition to its lyrics that stressed the importance of preserving history and illuminating the range of cultural connections that exist in the black diaspora, the calypso was written and performed by Alex in the traditional style of "santimanitay," (*sans humanité*, meaning "no mercy"). The santimanitay performance style developed in the early decades of the twentieth century and has been used for extempo performances, where calypsonians would engage in song duels with each other and exchange insults, derisions, and jokes. These duels would go on, verse after verse, until one of the performers caved in—hence, the theme "no mercy." In accordance with the style, Alex's calypso incorporates the standard chord progression

that is used for "santimanitay-styled" extempo performances (see Appendix page 255 for chord progressions). Additionally, during the performance of "History of Carnival" at the Tent, Alex also collaborated with a black British rap artist from Northern England, where they exchanged a few verses in a simulation of santimanitay, bridging the cultural and generational gap between extempo calypso and the freestyle tradition of hip hop.

In 2017, Alex performed "Unsung Heroes," which was co-written and co-performed with Debra Romain, a notable UK pannist, vocalist, and composer. The performance opened with a slide displayed on the projector screen which read,

> Unsung Heroes pays tribute to the people who contribute to the love of culture. Inspired by, the fact that we have been guilty of celebrating achievement after people have died. Therefore, it is an attempt to change our mindset collectively, to recognize and to celebrate each other.

Once Alex took the stage, he spoke of a need to recognize those who have done important work in the community, though they may not have received media attention or awards. During the bridge sections, Alex cites several such "unsung heroes." In the first bridge section, people that were cited included Sister Monica, Clair Holder, Cyril Khamai, Haroun Shah, Angela Cox, and Michael La Rose. Moreover, several of the people recognized in Alex's calypso were audience members at the Tent that night (and indeed "regular" attendees), which undoubtedly aided in his calypso being an instant crowd favorite in 2017.

A final calypsonian that I will note that has also had several memorable performances is Santiago. Though he is a relative newcomer to the London Calypso Tent, in comparison to Lord Cloak (inaugural member, 1992) and Alexander D Great (joined in 1996), Santiago has dazzled the audience year after year after year with his lyrical brilliance since 2013. Two pieces by Santiago that are among the most remarkable calypsos I've witnessed at the Tent include "Meat and Bush" (2015) and "Stutter Town" (2016). The 2015 calypso, "Meat and Bush," describes a

diet that his wife put him on because he had gotten "overweight" over the years. This diet consists of veggies, plenty salad, and no carbs, Santiago notes in the calypso. However, all of the references to food are, in fact, symbolism for human body parts and sexual activity. Thus, the food restrictions actually represent sexual deprivation, highlighting Santiago's extensive use of double entendre. For example, in Verse 3, he sings:

> **Verse 3**:
> If you're on a diet one thing you know for sure
> During holiday time, you know you're getting more
> The kind of food that you get on your birthday
> Make you wish it was your birthday everyday
> She gone give you things that she been holding back
> And fellas I'm gonna tell you that this is a fact
> Food so good you cannot complain at all
> Meat so tender she sucking the bone and all

The final piece by Santiago that was absolutely brilliant is "Stuttering Town," which landed him second runner-up in 2016. The piece is very witty, comedic, and full of irony. In my interview with Santiago, he told me that the inspiration for many of his calypsos comes from jokes that he would think of and later develop with punch-lines. Their particular placement in the calypso, according to Santiago, is what makes them effective.

> The calypso that I really like the most is the calypso . . . that had a pretty simple structure of an introduction verse that usually doesn't give away, that didn't really give away their punch-line necessarily. It didn't give away the song. You had to listen to the introduction and you still weren't too sure what was going on. And then you got hit with the chorus, then you started to get an idea. And the second verse really hits you with it. And then you went on to 2-3 more verses along that line, with an 8-line structure with something coming at the end. The end of the chorus, you have that punch-line that you're going to laugh at (Santiago 2017).

This can be seen in the structure and delivery of "Stutter Town." In this calypso, he describes moving into a new neighborhood and conflicts arising between he and the townspeople due to the "interesting" way they talked. The most effective element of the calypso is its clever and persistent use of sound devices at the beginning of strategically placed words. Verse 1 sets the scene in the fictional neighborhood, before revealing the punch-line of the calypso at its

completion in the eighth line: the people in the neighborhood are afflicted with a speech impediment, a recognizable and inescapable stutter.

> **Verse 1**:
> Well I regret the day that I moved to me neighborhood
> The environment nice but the people no good.
> Well I regret the day I moved to me neighborhood.
> The area nice but the people no good.
> These people does surprise me everyday.
> With the kind of shhhh others him them say.
> Well it's not what they say that's they're detriment.
> *But that they all seem to talk with an impediment* [**punch-line**]. Oh Lord, Oh Lord . . .
>
> **Chorus**:
> I moved to a *st-st-st-st-stuttering* town
> Where they don't have no *n-n-n-n-normal* people around
> Everybody *s-s-s-s-saying* things I can't understand
> Making me feel like I'm *a s-s-s-s-stupid* man

In the past five years (2013-17), there have only been three artists who have won the Calypso Monarch title: **Sheldon Skeete** for "Send Them Afghanistan" (2013), "Voices" (2014), and "How to Capture D Monarchy" (2015); **G-String** for "Referendum" (2016); and **Brown Sugar** for "Equal Opportunity" (2017). Sheldon Skeete won his first title at the London Calypso Tent in 2012. By 2014, he became the youngest calypsonian to win three consecutive titles in row. Coming off this historic run, Sheldon followed up his 2014 piece with "How to Capture D Monarchy," a song where he positions himself alongside the international giants of calypso music.

Sheldon's 2015 performance at the Tent began with a slideshow presentation that paid homage to legendary calypso artists. "Many have won the title," the first slide read. This was followed by images of The Mighty Sparrow, Chalkdust, Black Stalin, Cro Cro, and Shadow, with a listing of the number of times each artist won the Calypso Monarch crown in Trinidad and Tobago. The final slide of the presentation read: "After conversing with these 5 legends in 2014 . . . This is what followed in 2015." The drummer proceeded to click his drum sticks four times,

establishing the tempo of the song (72 bpm), and the band started playing the introduction to "How to Capture D Monarchy." The piece is composed in the key of B-flat major.

Sheldon entered on stage as the introduction played and claimed to be a messenger, having recently received a message from the "elders" to deliver to his calypso contemporaries in London, the Tent judges, and audience members. The message consisted of a "recipe for success" in producing a calypso capable and worthy of winning the Crown. In order to be successful in the competition, Sheldon contends that the calypsonian must build upon the traditions of the kaiso pioneers, be students of local and global affairs, and shed light on these issues in accordance with the calypso art form—values that are held in high esteem in the calypso tent. "Sing about this" and "sing about that," Sheldon declares in the chorus, while citing examples of issues like terrorism, police violence, corruption, and global poverty. The combination of these entities, according to Sheldon, is how one can "capture d Monarchy" (see lyrics on page 256 of the Appendix).

Sheldon's overall 2015 performance lasted seven minutes and forty seconds. The piece is structured in strophic form, is in 4/4 time, and consists of five repeating sections: Introduction – Verse – Chorus – Bridge – Interlude. The song begins with an 8-bar introduction that is led by the horns. The next 8-bar section is the verse and is led by the keyboard and bass/electric guitars. During the verses, the horns are used sparingly and only enter at specific moments to punctuate around the lyrics. Additionally, the phrase "capture d monarchy" is always sung at the end of the eighth bar, functioning as the punch-line of both the verse and entire calypso. The verse is followed by an 8-bar chorus, which always begins with the phrase "sing about this" and "sing about that." Each time that Sheldon sings these lines, the backing vocalists (Divettes) enter in 3-part harmony singing the word "sing." Every chorus is then followed by a 4-bar bridge section

that tells the story of a different legendary calypsonian calling or texting Sheldon with a message on what must be done to win the calypso title:

> **Bridge 2**:
> Shadow he call me on the phone
> While I sat down on my throne
> He said tell them put good lyrics to this melody
> And then they surely should capture d monarchy

During the final cycle of the song, Sheldon shifts his attention to the other competitors at the London Calypso Tent. In the final verse (4), he reveals one of his secrets for success at the Tent, suggesting that he does not write calypsos for the purposes of winning the title, but instead, is motivated by his endearment to the art form. Despite this, he insists that his skillful writing and performance consistently allows him to be competitive enough to potentially win year in and year out.

> **Verse 4**:
> My fellow kaisonians, I want you to understand
> All of the ladies and even the gentlemen
> When I decide to sit down and write my songs
> The very last thing on my mind is the Throne
> It's perspiration, inspiration
> The Almighty give me to have the motivation
> *Sometimes I smile and look at them with pity*
> *To see them fighting to capture d monarchy*

In the last two lines of verse 4 emphasized above, he evokes the picong-style of calypso that centers mockery and derision, as he takes a playful jab at the other competitors's unsuccessful attempts of dethroning him. This is then followed up with Sheldon preemptively declaring himself the 2015 Calypso Monarch in advance of the judging results during the final bridge section:

> **Final Bridge (4)**:
> Sparrow he text me on the phone
> While I sat down on my throne
> *He said announce the results and bring the trophy*
> *Cuz tonight I will retain d monarchy!*

Sheldon's emphatic proclamation that "tonight [he] will retain d Monarchy" served as the ultimate punch-line within the overall piece, which resulted in him receiving a standing ovation and shouts of "Kaiso! Kaiso! Kaiso!" from the crowd. And as he predicted, Sheldon's "How to Capture D Monarchy" performance guided him to successfully retain the Calypso Monarch title for the fourth consecutive year in a row in 2015.

For several years, G-String (Gerry Archer) has been a viable contender for the Calypso Monarch title. Despite the brilliancy of his music, he has come up just short of the Crown during several Tent competitions (see 2015/2017 respectively, where he was one of the top three finalists). In 2016, however, G-String finally broke through with a calypso for the ages entitled, "Referendum."

"Referendum" was performed at the London Calypso Tent just two months after the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum vote (June 23, 2016), which resulted in an unprecedented vote in favor of leaving the EU and produced an immediate crisis for Britain, EU citizens, and the global political economy. The Leave Vote and aftermath of the referendum (informally regarded as "Brexit") quickly became one of the biggest storylines of 2016 across the globe. In the carnival art world, the consequences and implications of Brexit were also picked up, as can be seen in G-String's 2016 performance at the London Calypso Tent.

In his rendition of "Referendum," G-String imagines himself to be an MP (member of Parliament) representing the "Calypso Party." Throughout the performance, G-String describes various reportings on Brexit and the issues that he has with the assessments. His calypso is also highly critical of the leadership of various British government officials (David Cameron, Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson, and current PM Theresa May) and even the Queen. As an alternative to their political agenda, he provides his own referendum manifesto that centers the wants, needs,

and desires of black people in the United Kingdom and those around the world who have been affected by British politics, historically and in the contemporary period.

The piece begins with the drummer setting the tempo at 90bpm and an 8-bar introduction section that is horn-led. The song is in the key of E major. Similar to "How to Capture D Monarchy" (2015) by Sheldon Skeete described earlier, "Referendum" is also structured in strophic form and is in 4/4 time. However, there are only four musical sections in "Referendum," as opposed to five: Introduction – Verse – Chorus – Interlude. Of all the pieces I've seen performed at the Tent over the years, G-String's "Referendum" is the longest by far in terms of its duration (11 minutes), as most performances at the Tent are typically between 7 and 9 minutes long. Additionally, most calypsonians at the London Calypso Tent perform about 3 to 4 verses total; "Referendum" features a whopping 9 verses (see lyrics on page 259 of the Appendix).

Over the course of his verses, G-String tackles a range of topics including the need for a calypsonian MP to render proper social commentary about the state of the country (verse 3); issues with BBC licensing and the lack of black representation within its broadcasting programs (verse 4); re-allocation of taxpayer money regarding the funding of Buckingham Palace and the salaries of the Royal Family (verse 7); and the desire to invest in the building of black institutions in London and elsewhere in the UK (verse 8). Below are two excerpts of the lyrics for verses 4 and 8.

Verse 4:
When I turn an MP
I'm tackling the BBC
Every year they send a letter
Cuz they want a license fee
But every time that I pay the license
And then I watch the TV
The programs that they put on it
I say that they don't representing me

Verse 8:
When I get in power
I'm closing down the London Dungeon
Then I'm running round the corner
And then I'm shutting down the Tower of London
And then I'm building a Black museum
For the whole world to see
The contributions that Black people made
To build this motherf***ing country

Each verse of "Referendum" is followed by an 8-bar call-and-response style chorus between G-String and The Divettes. During the chorus, The Divettes sing the phrase "Calypso Referendum," while G-String declares to the audience: "The only referendum that I voting for / It is the one that's for Calypso!"

While G-String offers sharp social commentary verse by verse, continuously building up over time, he also inserts a few comedic moments as well. For example, in verse 6, he takes humorous jabs at Boris Johnson (MP) and even describes a romantic invitation extended to him by Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, where she requests G-String to "come round / And sing a sweet melody tonight" (sexual innuendo). For the final verse (9) and chorus, G-String dedicates the lyrics to the Association of British Calypsonians and the Calypso Tent judges. He also takes a playful dig at Sheldon Skeete, who did not participate in the defense of his Crown at the Tent in 2016. The final message from G-String was an insistence that better transparency in the judging of calypso at the Tent is of the utmost importance for not only the integrity of the competition, but also the integrity of the calypso art form itself.

Verse 9:
When I get in power
I tackling the ABC
In the future the thing I'm looking for
They call it "transparency"
I don't want nobody to say
That the ABC is corrupt
But even when Sheldon Skeete don't come
They just still give Sheldon the Cup

Chorus:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
I'm tackling the ABC
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Yes, that is the one for me
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Tell the ABC so
If we want to keep it for long
We have to start to protect Calypso!

The last title-winning performance at the London Calypso Tent I will discuss in this chapter is "Equal Opportunity" by Brown Sugar (Beverley Browne) in 2017. Before this past year, it had been exactly one decade since a woman was pronounced "Calypso Queen" in London. The woman who was crowned ten years ago was also Brown Sugar with back-to-back titles in 2006 and 2007. Since then, Brown Sugar has been awarded second place for her calypso performances several times, including in 2013 with "Big Brother" and again in 2016 with "Black Man." In each case, Brown Sugar's delivery of serious social commentary and conscious lyrics helped to elevate her into being one of the top 3 finalist during three out of the past five calypso competitions in London. With her third title in 2017, Brown Sugar has cemented herself as being one of the most decorated calypsonians in the history of the London Calypso Tent, trailing only Lord Cloak (8) and Sheldon Skeete (4) in the number of titles won in the ABC-era.

After performing "Black Man" in 2016, which addressed rampant cases of police violence against unarmed African American men in the US and cited individuals such as 12-year-old Tamir Rice and Alton Sterling, Brown Sugar set her eyes on gender politics and unsettling male views on social norms during the 2017 London Calypso Tent with "Equal Opportunity." The performance began with an image being projected onto the stage screen that read, "IT'S HARD TO BE A WOMAN: you must think like a man, act like a lady, look like a young girl, and work like a horse" (Figure 4.10). With this text as the backdrop, a sound recording was played that featured traffic noises and the cries of a baby in the background.

Brown Sugar then appears on stage dressed ready for work and begins vacuuming. While hastily vacuuming different areas of the "room," she occasionally glances down at her watch to check the time presumably because she needs to depart soon for work. She then frantically runs off stage to "head out for her job." With Brown Sugar now off stage, the drummer clicks his sticks together four times to set the tempo (85bpm) and the introduction starts. During the horn-led introduction, Brown Sugar appears back on stage (presumably "after work") wearing an apron. This sets the scene of more post-work chores, albeit family-oriented, that is often tasked to women after returning home from their jobs.



Figure 4.10 – Brown Sugar performing at the London Calypso Tent, 2017

"Equal Opportunity" is performed in the key of E minor. Like the two aforementioned pieces, "Equal Opportunity" is also strophic, in 4/4 time, and contains five sections: Introduction – Verse – Chorus – Bridge – Interlude. The performance lasted just under nine minutes long, and consisted of three verses in total. Unlike "How to Capture D Monarchy" (2015) and "Referendum" (2016), however, the verses in Brown Sugar's "Equal Opportunity" are metrically irregular. Instead of having even 8-bar verses, the verses are 18.5 bars long. There are two reasons for the metrical irregularity in "Equal Opportunity," the first being that the lines in the verses of the piece are stretched out, making them twice as long. For example, while there are 4

beats per line in the other two songs, there are 8 beats per line in "Equal Opportunity." The second reason that contributes to the metrical irregularity in "Equal Opportunity" is due to there being 9 lines in each verse, as opposed to 8, with the final line of the verse functioning as a transitional passage into the chorus. An additional 2 beats are also added to the "extra" lines, making them 10 beats long rather than 8 (2.5 bars total). This stretching of the lines continues throughout the song, as the 8-line chorus is 16 bars long and the 5-line bridge section is 10 bars (see lyrics on page 264 of the Appendix).

Each verse is also demarcated by the word "woman," which begins the section during every cycle. For example, in verse 2, Brown Sugar sings: "woman, appreciate yourself more. Don't ignore, but explore your worth as a human being." In verse 3, she sings: "woman, for years of dedication to humans, I salute your faithful contribution." In setting her verses like so, Brown Sugar's calypso is rendered from a woman's perspective, centers women, and addresses women directly. This is then reinforced by images on Brown Sugar's PowerPoint slide show in the background. During Verse 1, an image of a woman with the words "work" and "family" on her mind is displayed onto the screen, and an image of a women's protest march for equal jobs and educational opportunities is displayed during the first chorus.

Similar to how every verse is demarcated by the word "woman," every chorus begins with the phrase "It's not equal!" Each chorus is structured in the form of a call-and-response between Brown Sugar and The Divettes. An example can be found below in Chorus 3:

> **Chorus 3**:
> *[Divettes: It's not equal]* – It's not equal, no!
> The same job we do, but he getting paid more than you
> *[Divettes: It's not equal]* – No, it's not equal. It's not equal.
> You're more qualified to be boss, but they push it to him first
> *[Divettes: It's not equal]* – No, it's not equal. It's not equal, no!
> Hoping for a break, wake up woman for goodness sake
> *[Divettes: It's not equal]* – No, it's not equal. It's not equal, no!
> You trying your best, but all they see is your dress

In addition to addressing job inequalities and pay disparities between men and women workers, Brown Sugar also sings about the difficulties women face balancing their work life and home life during the choruses: "All day on your feet / now they waiting on you to eat" (in Chorus 1), and "Working under stress / You come home and things in a mess" (in Chorus 2).

While trying to be encouraging to women as they continue to fight and climb, the piece is very somber on the whole rather than uplifting. One reason this may be is due to the seemingly unending wrought of oppression women face on a daily basis, in both private and public spaces. Thus, the bridge sections offer very little respite for women suffering from subjugation. Whenever The Divettes sing "equal opportunity," Brown Sugar consistently responds with "No, not for me." The only space that is made for some semblance of equality (read "peace") comes with Brown Sugar singing "Just leave me alone," for which The Divettes respond by singing "that's equality for me."

Like the works of the great calypsonians before her, Brown Sugar's calypso sheds light on the ways in which calypsonians continue to be on the vanguard of social and political issues of the times. During the mid-twentieth century, many calypsos encompassed the spirit of anti-colonialism, while others provided the soundtracks for burgeoning Caribbean nationalisms and the global Black Power Movement. In a similar vein, Brown Sugar's "Equal Opportunity" was rendered during a particular moment in 2017 which saw women mobilize in historic numbers all across the globe around various women's rights issues. Viewed in this context, "Equal Opportunity" seems to have anticipated the global "#Me Too" and "#Time'sUp" movements in key ways, and both the kaiso and fervor of the political moment had a resounding effect within the London calypso scene in 2017, landing Brown Sugar the title of Calypso Queen of Britain for the third time.

CONCLUSIONS

With the rise of the recording industry and the global mass migration patterns of Caribbean peoples during the twentieth century, calypso became one of the earliest internationally popular music genres in the world. In post-migration diasporic contexts, calypso music both resembled and diverged from those practiced in Trinidad and throughout the Caribbean, as the music began to take on localized idioms and subject matters that reflected the social predicament and circumstances of Caribbean migrant communities abroad. In the UK in particular, calypso afforded the "Windrush Generation" a means to carve out a place for themselves within the British national imaginary by articulating the intersections of blackness with Britishness. This is reflected in many of the early calypso recordings of the 1950s and 1960s that described migration and resettlement experiences, everyday examples of racial hostility and xenophobia, and changes in the socio-political climate of Britain in the era of decolonization. Beyond these early recordings in the postwar period, calypso has continued to expand within the cultural landscape of Britain via the popularity of the NHC street festival and the institution of annual calypso song competitions like the London Calypso Tent.

In order to discuss the production of the London Calypso Tent in particular, I framed the competition as a musical tournament of value, building on the writings of Arjun Appadurai in the *Social Life of Things*. Over the course of the chapter, I provided an ethnography of the London Calypso Tent that included insights into the infrastructure of the Tent, how it is run and operated, and by whom, in addition to analyses of several performances by calypsonians between 2013 and 2017, where I argued that the competition showcase can be understood as the performance of values. Regarding the infrastructure of the Tent and the competition framework, my ethnography illustrated how live performances at the London Calypso Tent are the principal medium through

which calypsonians exhibit their values to the public, as well as how value is assigned to British calypso artists and their music during the NHC festival season by audience members and competition officiants. Moreover, because the Tent is a *musical* tournament, it was my aim to establish its uniqueness from other non-music-related tournaments, where value and meaning is produced through "musicking": the organized sounds, stylized presentations, behavior patterns of those occupying the performance space, and the relationships fostered between performers, listeners, and judges in the context of competition.

Although the audience and platform for calypso in Britain today may not be as large as those for the NHC street festival, calypso continues to be a salient feature of UK carnival culture. This is so despite the fact that participating in the London Calypso Tent offers very little financial incentives for British calypsonians, and winning the Tent does not grant them access to the mainstream British music market. Additionally, being crowned Calypso King or Queen of Britain does not come with major press or the promise of signing a record deal, getting radio airplay, or starring in a music video. Despite the lack of mainstream popularity and annual issues of underfunding, ABC/ACUK continues to secure dozens of British calypsonians and guest artists to perform in their Tent year after year without fail. As I have shown throughout this investigation of British calypso competitions, participants take part in the London Calypso Tent not in pursuit of wealth accumulation, celebrity, fame, or even being crowned the Calypso Monarch for a season, but to continue promoting the art form in the UK in order to keep the tradition alive. This is done for the love of kaiso, and has transpired alongside the persistent support of a loyal community of carnivalists who value calypso music and its place as an indispensible component within the broader Notting Hill Carnival scene.

Pre-ABC Monarchs, 1974-1991

1974 – Big Davy (Evral Davy)
1975 – [no competition]
1976 – Mighty Tiger (Aston Moore)
1977 – Mighty Tiger (Aston Moore)
1978 – Mighty Tiger (Aston Moore)
1979 – Rival competition run by CAC and CDC

- (1) Mighty Tiger (Aston Moore)
- (2) Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
- Mighty Tiger (Aston Moore)

1980 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1981 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1982 - Mighty Tiger (Aston Moore)
1983 – Soca Baby (Betty Alexander)
1984 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1985 - Lucky (Patrick Humphrey)
1986 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1987 - Mighty Tiger (Aston Moore)
1988 - Voodoo Queen (Patricia Gillian)
1989 - [no competition]
1990 - [no competition]
1991 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)

ABC/ACUK Monarchs, 1992-2017

1992 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1993 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1994 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1995 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1996 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1997 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
1998 - Mighty Tiger (Aston Moore)
1999 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
2000 - Kerwin Du Bois
2001 - Wen'D (Wendy Davis)
2002 - Lord Cloak (Errol Brown)
2003 – Sister Sandra
2004 - Wen'D (Wendy Davis)
2005 – Helena B
2006 – Brown Sugar
2007 - Brown Sugar
2008 – Giselle (Giselle Carter)
2009 – Akima Paul
2010 – Alexander D Great (Alexander Loewenthal)
2011 - Alexander D Great (Alexander Loewenthal)
2012 – Sheldon Skeete
2013- Sheldon Skeete
2014 - Sheldon Skeete
2015 - Sheldon Skeete
2016 – G-String
2017 - Brown Sugar

London Calypso Tent Finals Competition

2015	2016	2017
Sheldon Skeete "How to Capture D Monarchy" (1st place)	G-String "Referendum" (1st place)	Brown Sugar "Equal Opportunity" (1st place)
G-String "Spoils of War" (2nd place)	Brown Sugar "Black Man" (2nd place)	Alexander D Great "Unsung Heroes" (2nd place)
Lord Cloak "People to Remember" (3rd place)	Santiago "Stuttering Town" (3rd place)	G-String "High Blood Pressure" (3rd place)
Santiago "Meat and Bush"	Alexander D Great "Cy Grant"	Helena B "Immigration"
Nikisha "Together"	De Admiral "Restrictions"	De Admiral "Our Father's Dey"
Alexander D Great "Differencism"	Clivus "Jah Wrath"	Lord Cloak "Where Were You?"
De Admiral "They Making ah Killing"	Dansa "Dey Publish it"	Rev B "Stop D Killing"
Music Man "Try"	Lord Cloak "Warning"	Santiago "Caribbean Creatures"
Dansa "Push Back"	Rev B "Move On"	Dansa "They Fooled Us"
Dave B "Veteran"	Musicman "King Crown"	Dave B "Saturday Night Soca Party"
	Dave B "Barbados"	

Table 2.2 – Competition songs at the London Calypso Tent,
2015 – 2017

FIVE

CARNIVAL ARTS AND "FREEDOM DREAMS": BLACK RADICALISM AS A POLITICS OF VALUE

> Understanding marginality as position and place of resistance is crucial for oppressed, exploited, colonised people . . .
>
> I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance—as location of radical openness and possibility. This site of resistance is continually formed in that segregated culture of opposition that is our critical response to domination. We come to this space through suffering and pain, through struggle. We know struggle to be that which is difficult, challenging, hard and we know struggle to be that which pleasures, delights, and fulfills desire. We are transformed, individually, collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world (hooks 1989: 21, 23).

Chapter 1 of this dissertation began with a historical survey of Caribbean migration and resettlement in the UK after the Second World War in the context of postwar British racism, xenophobia, and violence aimed at black ethnic minority communities. By the end of Chapter 1, I showed how their collective struggle against marginalization and British hegemony was the impetus for the emergence of a carnival movement, scene, and street festival in London during the postwar era, linking marginality to productions of value and meaning through carnival (Chapters 2 – 4). This chapter seeks to bring the dissertation full-circle by re-interrogating "marginality" as a site of resistance, radical openness, and possibility, as propagated by feminist theorist bell hooks (1989), and thereby illuminating the relationship between value, modalities of power, and struggles to transform marginality into empowerment. This will be explored by building on theories relating to the "politics of value," and extending them to account for the impact of racism and sexism in the lives of black organizers, musicians, and artists in London's carnival arts scene.

In the anthropological literature on value, one can find a distinct political imaginary that is linked to the analysis of forms of value. This discourse, centered on interrogations of a "politics of value," can be summarily described as processes that 1) seek to establish what value is; 2) ascertain what gets assigned value; 3) illuminate how certain modalities of value are privileged over others (e.g., economic forms vs. non-economic ones); and 4) determine which and whose values matter in particular times, places, and contexts. The latter is of particular importance in this chapter because it underscores the existence of not only hierarchies of value in London's carnival arts scene, but also hierarchies of power. Viewed this way, I argue that "value" can be used as an analytical tool to not only interrogate meaning and forms of signification, but also relations of power between dominant and non-dominant groups.

The "politics of value" as a theorized concept in the anthropological literature can be traced back to the writings of Arjun Appadurai (1986) and David Graeber (2001; 2013), and is also invoked in the writings of Karl Marx as well ([1867] 1972). A more in-depth review of their theories can be found in the Introduction Chapter of this dissertation. However, I offer a brief overview of their central contributions to the discourse on the politics of value below.

In addition to theorizing use and exchange values in *Capital*, Marx also develops the labor theory of value that unveiled relations of production and exchange under capitalism. His analysis of productive labor in particular, centered on economic exchange and the accumulation of surplus value for capitalists, enabled him to link the material conditions of capitalism and the wage-labor system to the rise of class formation and the class struggle. From this linkage, we see the emergence of what can be called a "politics of value" more generally, though Marx does not use this language explicitly in his writings. What is central to Marx's politics of value, however,

is the need to critically interrogate the ways societies produce and reproduce themselves (e.g., social relations, ruling classes, and forms of exploitation and inequality).

Appadurai's approach to theorizing the political dimensions of value is based on analyses of the conditions, paths, and diversions of objects as they undergo processes of economic exchange. Politics, according to Appadurai, is the crucial link between exchange and value. In order to illustrate this, he focuses his attention on the various social and economic forces that mediate the creation of desire and demand in market economies, particularly the influences and control mechanisms that are deployed by groups in positions of power and authority, and affects patterns of consumption. Appadurai's model, which privileges the activities of members of the elite and ruling class, is very much a top-down conception of value and politics; one that does not consider or make room for people who have been positioned at the bottom of society, or in its margins, to effect change and transformations of value in any meaningful way.

Graeber's theorization of a politics of value is premised on the possibility for social change, predicated on human creativity and action. In his theory, Graeber emphasizes the role of the imagination in bringing alternative social worlds into being, where he links the imagination to political struggles and projects for the realization of value(s). For example, in *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value* (2001), Graeber writes that the "Imagination implies the possibility of *doing* things differently; hence, when one *looks* at the existing world imaginatively, one is necessarily *looking* at it critically; when one tries to *bring* an imagined society into being, one is *engaging* in revolution" (emphasis added, 2001:88). I deliberately emphasize the verbs in Graeber's quote in order to highlight the fact that the imagination is an *act* itself; one that is centered on human creativity and the formation of new ideas and concepts, and also has the potential to mobilize other kinds of action to inspire and bring about change.

While the political dimensions of value are analyzed by these scholars at length, mostly in relation to class, neither of them account for race and gender dynamics in their analyses, nor the impact of structural oppression beyond classism in the lives of people who are also, always, racialized and gendered in societies that are constituted by hierarchical structures of power. Considering these dynamics, what if Marx's labor theory of value interrogated chattel slavery, the specific conditions of black workers, and offered a critique to *racial* capitalism instead of analyzing productive labor and the exploitation of an undifferentiated working-class? What if notions of desire and demand, as propagated by Appadurai in his politics of value, extended beyond mechanisms of manipulation by dominant groups in market economies and was reframed as a call to action among the oppressed; one where what is *desired* and being *demanded* is gender equality for women, the recognition of the basic human/civil rights of black people, and freedom from structural oppression? Finally, what if we investigate the imagination for its political potential (as Graeber advocates) in concrete terms, with a more direct focus on the ways in which imaginative acts become realized and materialized through specific cultural practices and political projects that seek to bring about social change for those populations that reside in the margins of society?

Such an account would shed light on the particular ways that racism and sexism also affect how people understand, create, contest, and even undermine values, especially those values that seek to maintain relations of domination and subordination. Additionally, accounting for these dynamics of marginality also points toward a flip-side of the politics of value; that is, when marginalized social actors engage in activities or invest in projects that are meaningful to them despite the continued perpetuation of systematic inequalities and asymmetrical power relations, those activities and investments can, in turn, produce forms of individual and collective

empowerment, and inspire creative actions to bring alternative social worlds into being. It is here that I believe the discourse on the Black Radical Tradition (BRT) can offer significant contributions to the study of value in general, and the politics of value more specifically. I will show this by drawing on the writings of political scientist Cedric Robinson and historian Robin D. G. Kelley, both of whom have investigated histories/traditions of black radicalism extensively.

In *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* ([1983] 2000), Cedric Robinson conceived of the BRT firstly as a theoretical discourse, and in the process of exploring its parameters and characteristics, he ended up producing a "new history" of the West and the modern world stemming from European racialism, labor exploitation, and the growth of capitalism. This history stretched from the Dark Ages to the mid-twentieth century and illustrates how the destinies of Europeans and people of African descent had become intertwined as a result of relations of domination and subjugation via colonial expansion, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, ideologies of white racial superiority, the development of a global capitalist system, and several imperialist invasions, wars, and occupations that sought to maintain a white supremacist world order. In the context of this history, Robinson also shows how the seeds of opposition were formed among enslaved Africans and their descendants in the belly of the beast, birthing black radicalism.

According to Robinson, the foundation of the BRT began with the "rejection of European slavery and revulsion of racism in its totality" by Africans and their descendants in the New World (2000:310). From there, the BRT was nurtured through the reestablishment of African communities in the Americas (marronage); religious practices such as obeah, voodoo, candomblé, Black Christianity, etc.; uprisings and insurrections such as the Haitian Revolution;

the use of creole dialects and coded songs among New World Africans to mask communication; militant black abolitionists seeking to overthrow the slave system; and the emergence of a prolific and radical black intelligentsia at the turn of the twentieth century that played a critical role in the global labor movement, anticolonial struggle, and the fight for civil and women's rights for people of African descent. Robinson cities W.E.B. Du Bois and C.L.R. James in particular as being among the first black scholars to write histories and revolutionary theories of the black struggle, which were also a critique to Marxism. Their scholarship argued that American slavery was a critical subsystem of world capitalism, with black labor being essential to its growth, development, and expansion. Their writings also revealed the deep-rooted inadequacies of Marxian critique and proletarian revolutionary consciousness to the black struggle, which did not take into account the ideological and systemic power of racism in their class-based analyses of exploitation under capitalism, or that "the organizers of the capitalist world system appropriated Black labor power as *constant* capital" in accordance with their racism (original emphasis, Robinson 2000:309). Thus, while many notable figures in the black struggle were also active members of the Communist Party in the first quarter of the twentieth century (Du Bois, James, George Padmore, Richard Wright, and many others), the inability of Marxist ideology to adequately address "the Negro Problem" as an integral component of the labor movement was a major catalyst for why they would eventually break away from Marxism and embrace black radicalism. This was not completely by choice, Robinson asserts, but arose out of necessity due to the inability of reconciling the "conflicts extant between Western radicalism and the struggle for Black liberation" (2000:308).

In addition to investigating the origins and evolution of Black radicalism within the context of the development of the West, Robinson also offers a gateway into exploring black

radicalism beyond its political and literary history. In the final chapter of the book, Robinson argues that the raw materials of the BRT, "the values, ideas, conceptions, and constructions of reality from which resistance was manufactured," have also been nurtured and transmitted across time and space as culture through African-descended peoples' "ability to *imaginatively* re-create a precedent metaphysic while being subjected to enslavement, racial domination, and repression" (my emphasis, 309). Like Graeber's writings on the politics of value, Robinson's work also links the imagination to politics and value. However, unlike the politics of value in the anthropological literature, the politics of value in black radicalism centers the conditions, experiences, aspirations, and perspectives of oppressed peoples of African descent, and "ideologically . . . cements pain to *purpose*, experience to *expectation*, [and] consciousness to *collective action*" (my emphasis, Robinson 2000:317).

Robin Kelley's writing on the BRT picks up on the foundation laid by Robinson and expounds more in-depth of the direct links of the radical imagination to collective action. In *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (2002), Kelley interrogates disparate socio-political and cultural movements across the twentieth century involving black radical activists, freedom fighters, and artists, and privileges the role of the imagination, visions, and mindscapes (i.e., "freedom dreams") to the formation and development of those movements. According to Kelley, the book was initially conceived as a "preliminary effort to recover ideas—visions fashioned mainly by those marginalized black activists who proposed a different way out of our constrictions" (xii). What started out as an "effort to recover ideas by marginalized black activists" evolved into a book that can be seen as a conceptual map of "freedom dreams" that stretches several decades and across large geographical distances, connecting early twentieth century social movements to ones of today as processes in a larger, collective effort for black

liberation. Additionally, the book was not simply a historical work and undertaking; it was also personal to Kelley's own development into a radical black scholar, teacher, and activist, and contained many biographical descriptions of his evolution over time. The seeds of opposition were planted by his mother, who, as Kelley notes,

> wanted us [he and his siblings] to live through our third eyes, to see life as possibility. She wanted us to imagine a world free of patriarchy, a world where gender and sexual relations could be reconstructed. She wanted us to see the poetic and prophetic in the richness of our daily lives. She wanted us to visualize a more expansive, fluid, "cosmos-politan" definition of blackness, to teach us that we are not merely inheritors of a culture, but its makers (2).

He then goes on to share his different political engagements and affiliations that stemmed from the seeds that his mother planted, which were nurtured through his involvement with Black nationalism, Marxism, and the study of Third World liberation movements, among other things. One of the many reasons this is an important addition to the book, I believe, is that it serves as an illustration that people come to terms with black radicalism in different ways and at different times.

In the middle chapters of the book, Kelley then begins to excavate the extent to which black people have had to struggle and search the world over for justice, equality, and freedom from race, gender, and class oppression. Examples in the book include black nationalist projects like the Back to Africa movement, the engagement of radical black activists in the Communist Party, the development of Afro-Asian alliances and Third World liberation movements, the historical push and demand for reconciliation/compensation for American slavery in the form of reparations, the evolution of the Black Feminist movement, and even the role of black musicians and artists in the Surrealist movement. Throughout the investigation, Kelley seems to be less concerned with the failures or limitations of these approaches to securing freedom, and more interested in pondering what can be learned from them for future struggles. Ultimately, for

Kelley, his central argument is that the pursuit of freedom and equality, regardless of the mechanisms people use to undertake the endeavor, absolutely necessitates a capacity to dream and re-imagine the world differently than its current form in order to make visible a new society that is free of poverty and oppression.

Though the scope, aims, and lens of analyses differ in the anthropological literature on the politics of value and that of the BRT, there is a commonality between the two around questions of exploitation, desire and demand, and how the imagination is linked to political projects and struggles. However, a central difference in the literature on the BRT is that race, gender, and class are not treated as peripheral or "add-ons" to questions of value. For Robinson and Kelley, they are central to understanding the politics of value in the first place because value is produced and circulated within global race, class, and gender hierarchies. Finally, in writings on black radicalism, the interrogation of a politics of value is not simply a theoretical exercise to define or establish what value is; it is also a means to expose existing power structures, inequalities, and socioeconomic disparities in society, with the desired outcome of achieving social justice, eradicating poverty, and dismantling systems of oppression.

Taking my cue from Graeber, Robinson, and Kelley, this chapter will illustrate that London's postwar carnival arts scene is not only a platform that celebrates blackness and British multiculturalism, but also a "political project" of black radicalism, "arenas for the realization of certain conceptions of value that can be understood in terms of a much larger history in space and time" (Graeber 2013:238). As part of a larger, radical black history in space and time, London's carnival arts scene is inextricably linked to the legacy of resistance to slavery, colonialism, and empire, and representative of the "margins coming into representation" in postwar UK in the midst of racial hostility, violence, and xenophobia (see Chapter 1). From this

context of different iterations of violence and oppression, I will show how carnival art, music, and festival performances in London have been used to not only subvert hegemonic power structures in postwar Britain, but also mobilize black political consciousness, promote diasporic solidarity, inspire radical feminisms, and articulate visions of a future society and world that is more free, just, and equal for marginalized communities of color.

CARNIVAL AS AN ARTISTIC MANIFESTATION OF THE BLACK RADICAL TRADITION

London's postwar carnival movement was born out of struggle, emanating from the denigration of the Britain's working class poor and violence toward black migrant communities. Despite the mainstream popularity and commercial success of NHC today, the annual production of carnival in London continues to reflect the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions of the black experience in British society. Thus, carnival in postwar London has never been void of politics: the politics of the streets and the right to space; race, class, and gender politics; cultural ownership and economic control of the festival; and even the place of blackness in the British national imaginary.

Since the inception of carnival in postwar London, black radicalism has been an enduring feature of the festival and carnival arts productions, linking marginality and oppression experienced by black migrants to creative forms of resistance seeking to bring about social change. This can be seen as early as Claudia Jones's first Caribbean Carnivals, from 1959-1964, which birthed Britain's carnival movement. While Jones dedicated her life to political and community activism for the working class poor, people of African descent, and the rights of women, she also believed that "a people's art is the genesis of their freedom," as printed in the souvenir program for her inaugural carnival in 1959. The intent behind her carnival was not to

simply celebrate Caribbean culture; it was to serve a political purpose with local and global ramifications. In the program's introductory statement, Jones wrote the following:

> If then, our Caribbean Carnival has evoked the wholehearted response from the peoples from the Islands of the Caribbean in the new West Indies Federation, this is itself testament to *the role of the arts in bringing people together for common aims*, and to its *fusing of the cultural, spiritual, as well as the political and economic interests of West Indians in the UK and at home* (emphasis added, Sherwood 1999:157).

What is revealed in the statement was Jones's desire to not only promote community-building among Caribbean Britons of varying national backgrounds, but also foster solidarity between Caribbean people internationally in order to combat black subjugation and injustice on a global scale.

In the era of massive African and Caribbean decolonization and the growth of the Black Power Movement, radical black politics became infused with carnival celebrations throughout the diaspora (Manning 1978; Cohen 1993). During the 1970s, NHC became synonymous with blackness, and, along with reggae music, it became a force for creating black unity across ethnic and cultural divides. It was also a crucial medium through which a new generation of British-born and/or raised black youth could strike back at British hegemony and combat racism. Carnival provided the grounds for self-validation, and black artists, organizers, and activists promoted the creative expressions of carnival as legitimate art forms and married these to the political struggles of Britain's black population. One of the central actors involved in the carnival scene during the 1970s who understood the political potential and value of NHC was Darcus Howe. He was an active member of the British Black Panther Party and he formed the Race Today Mangrove Renegade Band. In the late 1970s, the Renegades put on several exhibitions at NHC that synthesized art, culture, and politics, including "Forces of Victory," "Viva Zapata," and "Feast of the Barbarian" (Bunce and Field 2017:345).

In addition to Howe, the La Rose brothers (Michael and Keith) also believed that art and

culture were essential in supporting political struggle. Since the mid-1970s, the La Rose Brothers have been involved in various political movements and organizations in the UK, including the Black Parents Movement and the Association for a Peoples Carnival. Together, they ran Peoples' War Carnival Band from 1982 until 1998, a band that was invested in producing what they called "radical mas." The La Rose brothers believed carnival masquerade should make a statement, and so they used social commentary and satire to speak out against the perpetuation of injustices. Some of the masquerade exhibitions that they have put on over the years included "No Don't Stop De Carnival!"; "Haiti: Let Freedom Reign"; After the Windrush: 50 Years of the Caribbean Contribution to Britain"; and "Victory at Cuito Carnavale: Free South Africa!" among several others. In a 2015 interview I conducted with Michael La Rose, he told me that carnival is part of a larger "radical, resistance tradition" and it embodies "the language of the oppressed" in its very DNA. Thus, he encouraged me to explore the continued culture of creative resistance within carnival today.

What follows are three ethnographic examples that illustrate the continuation of this legacy of black radicalism and resistance in London's present-day carnival arts scene. The first example is based on a political kaiso written and performed by Alexander D Great. The second example is centered on a visual art piece designed by Stacey Leigh Ross entitled, "We Jammin Still" (2017). The final example consists of two interactive installations by Ishmahil Blagrove at NHC called "Spirit of Resistance"(2015) and "Culture Clash" (2016). Collectively, I use these ethnographic examples to interrogate the politics of value in London's carnival arts scene, illuminating how carnival artists imagine alternative social worlds for marginalized and oppressed peoples through their creative works, with the desire to ultimately bring those worlds in being.

POLITICAL KAISOS: RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH SONGS OF SOLIDARITY

As discussed in Chapter 4, the popularity of calypso in Britain has undergone periods of rapid growth and decline in the postwar period. However, the relationship of the genre to the black political imagination continues to be a salient feature of British calypso performances today. Since I began conducting research on British calypso in 2013, I have witnessed the performance of several pieces at the London Calypso Tent and beyond that can be described as "political kaiso." Political kaisos are calypso songs where performers provide observational or political commentary on various domestic and international social issues, including poverty and war, corruption among prominent politicians, and other significant events. One artist in particular whom I have followed for several years in London's carnival arts scene that performs political calypsos is Alexander David Loewenthal, aka "Alexander D Great."

Alex is a professional singer-songwriter, musician, and recording artist. I first met him in 2013 during the London Calypso Tent. During our time together, he not only shared insights with me about his life, upbringing, and career, but also provided me with recordings of his music and links to other resource materials related to calypso. Based on interviews I've conducted with Alex and events I've attended where he has performed, I will share how Alex articulates his political views, beliefs, and values through calypso songs that raise awareness about injustices, promote solidarity, and advocate for meaningful social change.

Alex was born in Trinidad in 1949, but has been living in the UK since he was three years old. He received his musical training and degree from Dartington College of Arts in Devon, England in 1977. Over the course of his 30+ year career as a professional musician, Alex has performed with several bands, performing in the styles of soul, rhythm and blues, rock, and reggae, and since 1993, he has been a devout calypsonian. According to Alex, he decided to

continue his music career performing calypso primarily because of his interest in "protest music" and a desire to return to his "roots."

> In 1993, I looked at myself, looked at what I've done and said: "Look, I've been in four different original bands, did quite good music, none of them really clicked. What can I do? I will go back to my roots. I'm going to go back to calypso." And what I remember what I liked about calypso was that it was *great protest music* dressed up (Alexander D Great 2013).

During the same interview Alex shared with me that, while he grew up listening to a wide range of music styles, including recordings by Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, and the Beatles, the first song he learned all the words to as a youngster was a political calypso by The Mighty Sparrow in 1957. The song was titled "Carnival Boycott."

> The first song to which I've remembered all the words . . . was a Sparrow tune called "Carnival Boycott." I'll tell you why because in 1957, he [Sparrow] boycotted the Carnival, and he was the biggest star and he was about 19 [years old]. He just had "Jean and Dinah" out the year before. It was a huge hit. Everyone loved him and the winning calypsonian got $25. The "Carnival Queen," who was invariably white or very pale skinned, got $5,000 and a new car in 1957. So we're looking at $5,000 as against $25. So he just wrote this song . . . and I was amazed.

After singing a few bars of the song to me, he called my attention to a particular section where Sparrow states that the Queen "does nothing for carnival / She only pretty that is all." As a form of protest, Sparrow suggests in the chorus that the carnival committee should "let the Queen run the show / without steelband and calypso. / Man, if you want to go you can go down there / but me ain't going nowhere."[51] At the time when the song was released, Alex was only about nine years old and thought Sparrow was actually referring to the Queen of England, Elizabeth II:

> I thought this guy was saying the Queen, as in Elizabeth . . . not realizing til many years later that it was the Carnival Queen. Nonetheless, that impressed me, the guts of this guy, and he was the first protest man to go across my radar (Alexander D Great 2013).

Sparrow's 1957 protest and calypso tune had an indelible effect on Alex's musical curiosity and

[51] "Carnival Boycott" by The Mighty Sparrow. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5fz9EFWOM0

ingenuity, as he began to become increasingly intrigued with the political potential and subversive power of calypso music. In addition to Sparrow, he also cited that he has been inspired by the political calypsos of Shadow, Chalkdust, and David Rudder, as well as the protest musics of Bob Dylan, John Lenin, and Bob Marley.

Over the years, Alex has written and performed many political kaisos including "Differencism," "I Want to Be King," and "Amandla Mandela"; the latter being an ode to the great freedom fighter and first post-apartheid President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela.[52] Of all of his political kaisos to date, the one that has brought him the most acclaim thus far is a piece called "Haiti" (2010). It was a competition piece that Alex performed at the London Calypso Tent in 2010, which won him his first UK Calypso Monarch crown. Before exploring Alex's calypso in more detail, it is worth contextualizing the significance that Haiti continues to play in the black political imaginary as a symbol of freedom, of liberation, and of possibility.

In the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution, the former slave colony of France has been the subject of a wide range of literary and historiographical works that attempt to situate the Revolution in global context and as constitutive to Western modernity itself (James [1938] 1989, Trouillot 1995; Fischer 2004; Dubois 2004; Buck-Morss 2009). As a crucial world event, historian Celucien L. Joseph notes how the Haitian Revolution continues to be an important "reference point for thinking about freedom, universal human rights, social justice and equality in our postcolonial moment" (2012:37), and thus, inspirational for a number of radical black activists and artists across the diaspora. Jeremy Matthew Glick has also documented this phenomenon in his 2016 book publication entitled, *The Black Radical Tragic: Performance,*

[52] Each of these songs are featured on Alex's 13-track calypso album titled, *After the Windrush* (2015).

Aesthetics, and the Unfinished Haitian Revolution.

At a time when colonialism and the institution of slavery in the Americas were widespread and normalized, the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution came to represent the possibility of freedom and self-government for black people in the modern world. As a result, the Haitian Revolution is imbued with symbolic and political value among black radicals, and is also linked to ideas of black liberation, resilience, and alternative futures. Alex's views on the significance of the Haitian Revolution are very much aligned with the community of intellectuals, activists, and artists listed above. In his own words, Haiti has been a "beacon of hope for the black diaspora" ever since "she shook off slavery" (Alexander D Great 2018). However, their freedom has come with a great price, one that Haiti is continuing to pay even to this day, as Alex's 2010 calypso illustrates.

In Alex's political calypso "Haiti," he presents a broad history of the pain and widespread suffering that Haitians have endured since the island became the first black republic in world and first country in the Western hemisphere to end slavery. Part of this history is captured in verse 2 of the piece, beginning with the slave insurrection on the island between 1791 and 1804. Coinciding this history, Alex exposes the contradictions that existed in Enlightenment thinking of the late eighteenth century regarding human freedom and its political value as a universal right of man, which did not extend to tens of millions of colonial slave laborers of African descent in the Americas during the Age of Revolution. Compounding these contradictions, Alex also illuminates how France forced Haiti to compensate them in the amount of 150 million francs for their independence at the end of the verse 2, a debt Haiti continued to pay until 1947.[53] Alex

[53] Despite fervent requests for the monies to be transferred back to Haiti, France has refused to repay Haiti for their independence debt. https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/France-Clarifies-It-Wont-Repay-Haitis-Independence-Debt-20150511-0032.html

argues that it is one of the many reasons Haiti has become the poorest country in the Western hemisphere.

> **Verse 2**:
> Haitians fought a 10-year war til 1804
> Winning their freedom and showing Napoleon the door
> *La Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* just empty slogans
> Breaking like waves on the shore
> Why France wanted reparations?
> By charging their once enslaved nation
> Cry! To pay 150 million
> And today that's 20 billion

While providing commentary on the extent to which Haiti has had to withstand unprecedented amounts of suffering since declaring freedom and revolting against France, the calypso also offers sharp critiques to American imperialism, foreign military occupations, uneven international trade laws and regulations, and the corruption of government officials (see verses 3 and 4). The lyrics of the entire calypso can be found on page 266 in the Appendix section. When I asked Alex about the nature and purpose of the song in one of our interviews in 2013, he replied by saying,

> Haiti's a very angry song about the reasons why Haiti is so poor has nothing to do with the [2010] earthquake or anything else. It's because they had the cheek, the gross temerity, the unmitigated nerve to beat Napoleon two hundred years ago in a war that lasted 10 years [Haitian Revolution]. And the slaves beat the world's biggest army. 60,000 of Napoleon's best and finest had their backsides kicked. And America, France, and Britain will not let them forget . . . One percent of the population [in Haiti] is filthy rich and the rest is starving in the street. And so, I wrote this song about why Haiti is so badly off. And in it, I tell the story about France, I take America to task. All the rest of it (Alexander D Great 2013).

In addition to its sharp critiques of the historical atrocities that Haitians have suffered, Alex also intended "Haiti" to be a song of solidarity with the Haitian people who were in the midst of recovering from a horrific 7.1 magnitude earthquake that violently shook the island in January of 2010; the earthquake affected over 3 million people and claimed the lives of more than 100,000. While I did not witness the original performance of "Haiti" by Alex in 2010 after

the earthquake, Alex performed the piece again at the Sixth Biennial Steelband Conference held in London, for which I was in attendance. The conference took place on October 8, 2016, just a few weeks after Hurricane Matthew tore through the Caribbean and decimated several islands, including Haiti. Just as in 2010 when he performed the song after the massive earthquake, the environmental crisis that emerged in the aftermath of the deadly 2016 hurricane season was the impetus to again stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti.

Many ethnomusicologists have written about uses of music in mitigating real-world problems, whether in the context of war, violence, poverty, disease epidemics, environmental crises, and other widespread tragedies (Pettan 1998; Barz 2006; Ritter and Daughtery 2007; Macy 2010; O'Connell 2011; Dirksen 2013; Rice 2014; and Rees 2016). In the musical example by Alex, the "Haiti" calypso is used as a vehicle for black radicalism to not only speak out against the historical atrocities that have afflicted the people of Haiti, but also empower the vulnerable in their time of need post-disaster through practices of solidarity. This message of solidarity is reflected in the song's chorus and serves as a call to action for international support of Haiti and its people, as they continue to recover from the legacies of European and American exploitation, as well as the onslaught of natural disasters wrought by climate change.

Chorus:
Haiti, this world has refused you
Haiti, confused and abused you
Haiti, can there be no end to your pain?
How much more can remain?
Haiti, this world has to face you
Haiti, have some grace and embrace you
Haiti, we can't turn our backs on you again

Moreover, what surfaces from the context of Alex's performance can be interpreted as a particular politics of value, where to stand in solidarity and support Haiti is to not only advocate justice for Haitians, but also actively attempt to keep the "beacon of hope" that Haiti represents

for the black diaspora alive, as a symbol of freedom, alternative futures, and the possibility of a better world to come.

"WE JAMMING STILL": SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE EMPOWEMENT OF BLACK WOMEN

The fight for justice and socio-economic equality for women is a global phenomenon, and women from all around the world have attempted to combat patriarchy, misogyny, sexism, and sexual violence in a variety of ways. In the black freedom struggle in particular, the Woman Question has always stood alongside the Negro Question, where black women like Sojourner Truth, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Burnett, Amy Jacques Garvey, Claudia Jones, and countless others were on the frontlines of the black liberation movement, though oftentimes relegated to the margins in historical accounts and narratives. In the second half of the twentieth century, a new wave of black feminists thinkers, scholars, and activists picked up the mantle for freedom and have made tremendous interventions in Black studies, Women and Gender studies, and Queer studies, especially pertaining to questions of self-definition, equity, social justice, and intersectionality (Davis 1983; Lorde 1984; Crenshaw 1989; hooks 1992; Collins 2000). At the core of these initiatives and interventions are not only critiques of systemic inequalities and unjust power relations, but also models that actively "reconceptualize the social relations of domination and resistance" (Collins 2000:273).

This radical black feminist spirit of resistance continues to inspire a range of protests and forms of activism today, including those that take the form of art. The following section provides insights into the intersections of radical black activism and art in the realm of carnival through the work of Trinidadian artist Stacey Leigh Ross. The focus will be on a piece created by Ross called "We Jammin Still" (2017) that addresses asymmetrical power relations and the constant

threat of violence that women and girls face in the Caribbean and UK. Moreover, through the example, what emerges are insights into a feminist politics of value that is grounded by a desire for social justice and promotes the empowerment of black women.

Ross is a 40-year-old black woman of Trinidadian heritage who works as a freelance artist in the UK after moving there from Trinidad in 2003. She received a Master of Arts degree in Applied Imagination from Central Saint Martins University in London, and currently lives in Royston, Hertfordshire, UK, along with her husband Chris and two children. I first met Ross in London at "Carnival Expo" 2017, a two-day event that can be summarily described as "everything-you'll-ever-see-related-to-carnival-under-one-roof" (costumes, food, music, art, etc.). Ross was one of the registered vendors selling her art pieces at the event. After generally surveying several items on display, I began to talk to Ross about specific pieces that piqued my interest, most notably a painting entitled "We Jammin Still," which featured a full-figured Caribbean woman dressed in "pretty mas" as the centerpiece of the painting. Upon closer inspection of the piece, I became fascinated with the multi-layered collage of images and texts surrounding the woman, which I did not initially see from afar. As Ross began to provide me with general information about the painting and insights into its production process, I immediately wanted to learn more about the life of the artist, what motivated her work, and as much about the "We Jammin Still" painting as possible. So I purchased the piece and set up an interview with her so that we could talk about it more in-depth.

In the week following Carnival Expo, Ross and I met near Kings Cross station in London for our scheduled interview. In the nearly 2-hour interview, Ross shared information with me about her upbringing in Trinidad and discussed the formative role that carnival and carnival arts has played in her life since she was young. She also provided insights into her development as an

artist, including the central role that both women and carnival play as inspirational material for the making of her pieces. And finally, Ross revealed to me the things that led to her transformation into an activist and how she came to start producing art pieces that serve as social commentary on issues concerning black communities, especially black women. What follows are insights gained via the interview and other materials shared with me from Ross since then.

During the interview, Ross informed me that she was always very conscious of her blackness in Britain, as she worked and lived in a rural English town with few black residents. Additionally, she told me that she also felt a certain kind of pressure to suppress aspects of who she was in order to "get ahead" in the UK. However, in 2016, everything changed for her, she insisted to me. One of the most significant factors for the change was her participation in Carnival Expo for the first time, which she admits helped her connect back to her Trinidadian/Caribbean roots. In our interview, she shared the following with me about her experience at Carnival Expo:

> I remember standing at my booth and looking around at all these first- and second-generation Caribbean people, and how colorful they were. And how, you know, their hairstyles, their makeup . . . they were strutting around in their bad suit like we still in Port of Spain [Trinidad]. And I remember thinking to myself, "when did you forget who you were?" It was like roll back the years and think, "you were that person. You used to be like that . . . What the fuck, Stacey?" And then I made a commitment to myself . . . to be Caribbean. I love bright colors. WEAR BRIGHT COLORS! And to bring my sunshine with me wherever I am going regardless of the weather . . . And that was kind of the first stage of "remember who you are" (Ross 2017).

Prior to Carnival Expo and her return to her "roots," Ross spent several years in the UK working odd administrative jobs and not producing art works. After her and her husband moved from London to Royston, she eventually went back to making art. Ross became a member of the local arts society in Royston and started participating in the Royston Arts Festival. She would later get commissioned by JC Wetherspoons (a popular pub chain in the UK) to produce a mural for a chain they were opening up in Royston. While Ross loved the fact that she was getting back

involved in painting and producing creative works, she told me during the interview that she started to get somewhat bored with her work. She didn't feel completely satisfied with what she was producing.

> At first I was just painting to disappear into the painting and to reconnect with the fact that I used to paint and then stopped for 8 years. But then, you know, there comes a point when, ok, it's all well and good to experiment with techniques and . . . it's pretty. But my whole ethos of doing art ever since I've known myself has always been to do something that is more than just pretty. *It should serve a purpose*. You know art is a language . . . It's a weapon. And I just wasn't using it . . . So I started to get quite restless which is never a bad thing. It just means you're moving up to the next level. And I started realizing, ok I wanted to do some more community-based stuff. So I started doing stuff with the local school that my son goes to. And you know, you start where you are, the local museum. Ok, fine. But it wasn't quite enough. And then there was the whole Stanford rape case thing. And that was in the news (emphasis added, Ross 2017).

The high-profile case that caught Ross's attention, where Stanford University student Brock Turner was being charged for sexually assaulting an unconscious woman on the school's campus, was broadcast worldwide and covered extensively in the news for months. Though Turner was eventually found guilty of rape, the judge presiding over the case sentenced Turner to only six months in jail; he served just three months of his six-month sentence. Like the #MeToo movement that would take the world by storm one year later, the results of the Stanford rape case also brought glaring attention to the ways in which society and the justice system continue to fail victims of sexual assault, especially women.

The Stanford rape case was one of several incidents in 2016 that would shake Ross to her core. Others that she shared with me were the build-up and aftermath of Brexit, as well as widespread reports of police violence against black American citizens throughout the summer of 2016. She called the latter the "Great Black Manhunt" of 2016. However, sexual abuse and harassment against women and girls was one thing that affected her deeply, and personally, she disclosed to me. So when the woman that Brock Turner assaulted came forward and wrote a

letter, Ross read it in full and it had a powerful effect on her.[54]

> I read that [the letter] and I was like, "yes. Yes!" I loved that letter. It was powerful. I could not imagine what he could possibly say after that to explain himself cuz there is NO FUCKING EXPLANATION. And ok, so that was a wild moment. And ok, this is important to me. But you know you kind of follow it with, "what do I do with this? What do I do with this?" Ok, my skill is art. So what am I going to do? Ok. I wanted to do a community thing, and I'm really upset about the fact that we have this kind of rape culture still perpetuating. And I am an artist. I need to combine that in some way (Ross 2017).

After reading the letter and reflecting on her own experiences, Ross knew she wanted to do something, though it wasn't very clear to her at the time what she could do. Nonetheless, more things related to sexual abuse continued to pop up on Ross's radar.

> You know when you're kind of casting around for something . . . [and] there's that feeling when you know the universe is kind of moving you in a direction, but you haven't caught sight of it yet. You can see things falling into place but you don't know what they're falling into place for. Ok, so that was that. And then there was a BBC article about school children, and I'm talking about primary and middle school children wearing shorts under their skirts. Girls wearing shorts under their shorts to prevent sexual harassment in school. And I'm thinking I've got . . . at the time, she was two and half, three year old daughter! Really? She's gonna have to wear shorts under her skirt in school, in a controlled, contained environment because you can't control sexual harassment? Then what happens when we get out into the wider world? I'm very aware that not all men are assholes. And a large number of them are not. But the assholes are loud! The good ones seem to be quite quiet (Ross 2017).

In the interview, she called this period of deep introspection her "awakening," and from that moment onwards, she's chosen to no longer be silent about the perpetuation of injustices against marginalized peoples.

> I had quite a few sledgehammers slam into my life . . . Oh, I cried and bawled my eyes out, but once that excess of emotion was gone I was left in a state of numbness, or so I thought. Turns out it was really deep introspection. I managed only one painting and a handful of doodles in seven months. I just couldn't find the will to paint. It took one year, four life changing events, a trailer-load of lower-level angst, and me paying a lot of attention to my instincts to finally figure it out. It was time for CHANGE. Things started popping up on my radar—violence, rape culture, social injustice, lack of empathy, hate-mongering, dirty politics, hate crimes, sex crimes, refugee crises, abuse . . . And the list goes on.

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[54] Letter written by the victim in the Stanford rape case. https://www.buzzfeed.com/katiejmbaker/heres-the-powerful-letter-the-stanford-victim-read-to-her-ra?utm_term=.ndv5kg0D8#.wuOB8pQek

In order to bring about awareness of these issues, Ross uses her life experiences as a black woman and her expertise in the traditions of carnival art as the cornerstone to her activist-oriented paintings.

> I come from a Caribbean island where the mas' [masquerade] is an art form that speaks each individual's truth. Old calypsos, kaiso and ole mas' used to be THE newspapers of my people. Pretty art is pretty but powerful art is unforgettable and life changing. And so it began (Ross 2017).

The first piece that she has produced while on this new journey is called "We Jammin Still" (2017), which explicitly addresses sexual abuse against women and girls, and combines themes from the Caribbean and traditions of carnival to engage in a form of radical "artivism."[55]

Ross's "We Jammin Still" is an adaptation of the biggest soca hit song of 2017, "Full Extreme" by the Ultimate Rejects. The tune was released in December 2016 in time for the 2017 Trinidad Carnival in February. It won the Road March title in Trinidad for being the most played song on the road during carnival, and was played extensively during Caribbean-styled carnival celebrations around the world throughout the year, including at NHC. While "Full Extreme" was the carnival party anthem of 2017, the song is also immersed with social commentary pertaining to the ways vulnerable people in society continue to find ways to keep on surviving in the face of adversity. This can be seen in many of the song's lyrics.

> **Verse 2**:
> Recession doh [don't] bother we
> Promote a fete [party] and you go see
> How we go party to the full extreme
> And light it up with kerosene
> Oh God, the Treasury could burn down
> We jammin still, we jammin still
> The economy could fall down
> We jammin still, we jammin!

[55] Ross also disclosed to me that she is currently working on a piece entitled "Some Lives Matter."

In my interview and follow-up conversations with Ross, she pointed out to me that one of the things that make the song brilliant is its use of double entendre and how it reflects aspects of Trinidadian society.

> Yes, Trinbagonians [people from Trinidad and Tobago] are happy, joyful people that carry on in the face of adversity BUT, we are also people who will bury our noses in our back yards, and so long as *our* party is still going we will ignore everything that is falling down around us. Our greatest strength is also our greatest weakness.
>
> And that's true! Trinidadians are so obsessed . . . On one hand, it's a beautiful thing, and on the other hand, it's the thing that's holding us back. We're so obsessed with the party that unless the party stops, people will not rise up. Interrupt the party and then you will see chaos [laughs]. "They do what?! They stop di party?!" That will lead to revolution. And maybe, carnival needs to go where it's going to stop the party so that we can start the party again (Ross 2017).

With this as a conceptual backdrop, Ross adapted the tagline "we jammin still" to provide some social commentary of her own, one that not only addressed cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse against black women and girls within the context of women's experiences in the modern carnival, but also celebrated femininity, women's agency, and female sexuality.

To begin the art project, Ross conducted research on cases of sexual violence against women and girls in the Caribbean and in the UK, and attached statistics and newspaper headline clippings of several cases on the background of the canvas for the painting (Figure 5.1). Some examples of these include the following: "1 in 5 Jamaican women has experienced physical or sexual violence from her partner in her lifetime"; "42.8% of women's first sexual experience in the Eastern Caribbean was forced"; "1 in 4 children suffer abuse in the eastern Caribbean"; "In the UK, 250,000 teenage girls are suffering from abuse at any one time"; and "10,000 women a year file for restraining orders in T&T." The idea to use statistics and newspaper clippings to orient the piece was inspired by the work of London-based photographer and activist Fiona Compton, who started the powerful #NotAskingForIt and #SinceItsNudesYouLike social media campaigns. In addition to these, portions of the letter written by the rape victim in the Stanford

rape case were placed alongside the statistics and headlines, which Ross burned and discolored using tea bags in order to symbolize what she described as the "irrevocable damage, [in the aftermath of rape], that violently changes a person's life, attitude, [and] body" (Ross 2017).

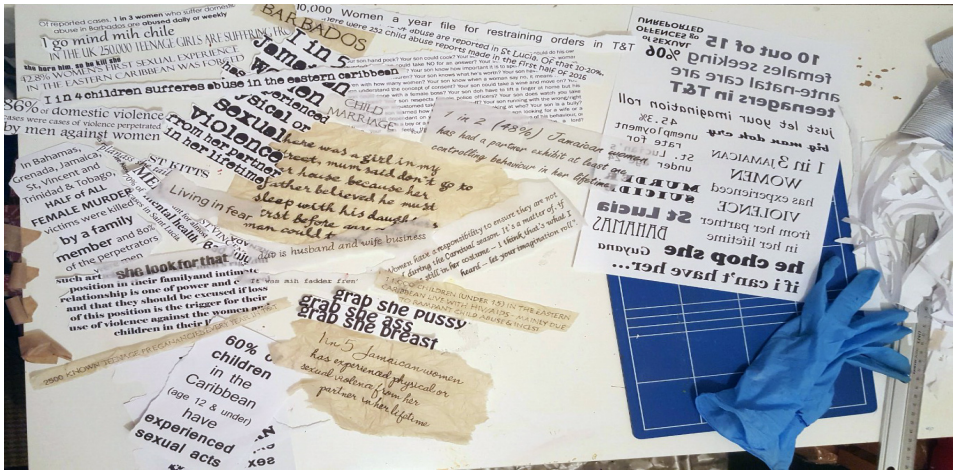


Figure 5.1 – Early production stages of "We Jammin Still" (2017)
Picture courtesy of Stacey Leigh Ross

Within this context of mounting evidence of sexual violence and the perpetuation of rape culture spread across the canvas are five figures strategically placed throughout the painting, each different depictions of women and girls: 1) in the bottom-right corner of the painting, there is a figure of seated woman who has her knees positioned against her chest as if bracing for an attack; 2) in the top-left, there is another woman who is bending over to comfort an abused child; 3) the fading image of a traditional Caribbean woman is presented just left of center; and finally 4) the figure of the modern Caribbean woman playing pretty mas with a clinched fist in the air is directly center. Aside from the gold necklace and bracelets located on the wrists and ankles of the modern Caribbean woman, the costume of the female carnivalist is simple in design, effectively making her "voluptuous" body a focal point from the perspective of the viewer. Additionally, the costume accessories (or "glitz" as Ross calls them) were implemented as double entendre, operating with two different meanings at the same time. On one hand, her

"glitz" are simply accent pieces for her carnival costume. On the other hand, Ross revealed to me that,

> Her glitz . . . acts like the shackles [of] old because she is still shackled by the modern obsession with 'sexy', by the violence of the past that has stretched into the present, by the teachings of the women before her . . . Our historical acceptance and expectation of certain behaviors from Caribbean men still shackles us, and them. Unless we understand it and actively work to stop it, we ALL perpetuate it (Ross 2017).

At the end of the production process, Ross added a red banner with the words "We Jamming Still" to the painting to finalize the piece; the banner is being held up by the modern Caribbean woman who, despite the barrage of abuse and degradation leveled at her, is empowered to reclaim her agency, her body, her sensuality/sexuality, and her sense of worth (Figure 5.2). Like the glitz that Ross applied to the costume of the masquerade figure, the banner, too, is intended to be interpreted as a form of double entendre, with the sole purpose of encouraging collective action against sexual violence and abuse.

> Yea, I came back and I just cut out that and I put it . . . and I thought, "Yea. Now we're jammin." And for me "We Jammin Still" is . . . we jammin in spite of all this stuff going on cuz we're strong. But we're [also] jammin in spite of all this because we refuse to do something about it. And we're still obsessed with pretending it's not happening . . . So yea, hopefully in my next 40 years, we'll be very, very awake and doing stuff about it (Ross 2017).

In sum, "We Jammin Still" by Stacey Ross represents a black woman's standpoint on the politics of value, one that is firmly rooted in black feminism and points to "alternatives to the way things are [and how they are] supposed to be" (Collins 2000:286). In her carnival-inspired art piece, Ross depicts the black female body as being suspended between oppression and liberation simultaneously. On one hand, the black female body is deployed as the site of violence and exploitation, being surrounded by the constant threat of violence. This can be seen in the volume of statistics and quotes that covers the entire canvas of the artwork, indicative of the ever-present realities of misogyny, sexism, patriarchy, domestic abuse, and rape that are a part of

everyday society. On the other hand, the black female body is also being celebrated as a site of knowledge, pleasure, and power, undermining racists and sexists ideologies that denigrate black women's sense of worth through hegemonic forms of control. Moreover, insights from the interview with Ross illustrate linkages between her political imagination and the development of "We Jammin Still," where the value of the piece lies not in how much it sold for (£130), but in her personal conviction to use her art as a form of activism to empower black women and promote social justice for victims of abuse and sexual assault.



Figure 5.2 – "We Jammin Still" (2017)
Picture courtesy of Stacey Leigh Ross

"APPROPRIATE THIS, MOTHERFUCKERS!": BLACK TRAUMA AND CREATIVE RESISTANCES TO VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION

In the final example of this chapter, I turn my attention back to the NHC street festival. As discussed in Chapters 1 through 3, the NHC street festival is a unique social space that has a distinct history rooted in anti-black violence and marginalization, and is imbued with meaning and value by a range of actors who produce, manage, and occupy the now commercialized space. Chapter 3 also illustrated that the NHC street festival is situated within multiple regimes of value, which I analyzed using four differing orientations to the festival space: the general public, public stakeholders, corporate sponsors, and culture producers (the carnivalists). My analyses revealed that the annual production and execution of NHC creates varying contestations over the value and meaning of carnival and how the NHC festival space can and should be used. The existence of these ongoing tensions and struggles also highlights the fact that social spaces are never de-politicized, but are always implicated in relations of power (Lefevbre 1974; Massey 1994; Allen 1999).

Considering the extent to which the NHC has undergone significant changes since the mid-1960s, transforming from a small-scale community event put on by marginalized peoples to a multimillion-pound enterprise that is now London's pre-eminent global attraction for tourism, power relation issues abound in the annual production of the NHC street festival. This is exacerbated by the fact that the culture producers of NHC are mostly black and working class, and black labor and creativity are consistently exploited and appropriated during the production of NHC (see examples from Chapter 3 on masquerade and corporate sponsorship). As a result, it is not the carnival organizers or culture producers who receive the lion's share of financial benefits that are generated during the street festival; instead, the city of London and NHC

stakeholders benefit the most financially from the commercial success of carnival. However, as stated to me by carnival historian Michael La Rose, carnival is, and continues to be, a culture of resistance. So there is always the possibility of new creative strands of resistance to emerge at NHC that challenge and undermine existing structures of power.

> I'm always looking for this new creative, new resistance strand. I am . . . I haven't been disappointed so far, right? I was part of it at one point. But also, I'm looking out for the new set coming through. And I think you will always find that within the carnival. *Because once it stays on the streets, it's a possibility*. If it moves into a park and it's enclosed and then corralled and then whatever else, then there's more chance of controlling that expression and that creativity (emphasis added, La Rose 2015).

What follows is an ethnographic example of how the streets of Notting Hill become a space of possibility for not only subverting hegemonic power relations, but also imagining new futures for black Britons through forms of creative resistance. The example consists of two radical interactive installation pieces that were exhibited at NHC in 2015 and 2016.



Figure 5.3 – NHC 2016, Ishmahil Blagrove (white shirt) pushing his installation piece: Culture Clash

On Carnival Sunday at NHC 2016, I witnessed a man pushing a decorated shopping cart through the congested crowds and giving out "free" rum shots to carnival attendees who engaged him on the streets (Figure 5.3). He was not part of any of the official NHC performance units,

but was operating on his own accord. At the time when I spotted him, he was near the intersection of Powis Mews and Talbot Rd, just in front of a club called "The Globe" where a performance stage for DJs and live musicians was assembled specifically for carnival. The stage was designed in the shape of a huge white ship, with bold black letters written on its side that read "Empire Windrush," and just underneath that, "London." The make-shift stage was modeled after the historic *Windrush* ship that brought nearly 500 passengers from the Caribbean to London in 1948, and was also intended to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the NHC (see Chapter 1).

The man that was pushing the shopping cart is Ishmahil Blagrove, Jr. Blagrove is a radical black activist, resident of Notting Hill, and a long-time community organizer in London. He is also an editor for RiceNPeas, an independent film and book publishing company. I first met Blagrove in summer of 2014 at a book launch event commemorating the history of the NHC, a book in which he was the co-editor. When I got the opportunity to interview him in 2015, and again in 2017, I learned not only the story behind the man, but also of his commitment to uplifting the black communities of Britain and beyond.

Blagrove is of Jamaican parentage and was born in the UK in the late 1960s. For more than 30 years he has regularly been on the frontlines combatting injustices in the Notting Hill community that black and ethnic minority communities face—most recently being the horrific tragedy that befell the Grenfell Tower in June 2017. Discussing his childhood in our initial 2015 interview, Blagrove told me that during the 1960s and '70s, his generation represented the first postwar British-born black population. They were the children of the *Windrush* and African immigrants. He acknowledged how incredibly diverse these communities were culturally (hailing from different Caribbean islands and African countries), connecting only, at times, on

the level of their blackness. This meant that all these groups faced various forms of prejudices and discrimination as minority communities in Britain. For example, it was in Birmingham, he recalls, where he was called a "wog," "nigger," and "coon" for the first time; he was only 9 years old. He continued stating that such experiences were instrumental in the "journey of formulating and shaping that sense of 'blackness,' including "coming back to London [at] about [the age of] 10 or 11 and being stopped by the police for just wearing a silver ring," describing his first personal encounters of police harassment. These incidents were fundamental in shaping how he came to know himself and of his precarious situation in Britain, being born of this society yet being rejected by it, existing in a kind of "limbo space," he told me. Consequently, experiences of racism, police harassment, and an awareness of widespread inequalities led to his participation in a number of grassroots social justice organizations from his days as a youth through adulthood. These have also spanned several continents, including North America (in the Caribbean specifically), Africa, and in Europe. Regarding his activism, Blagrove stated:

> I believe that even now, to this very day, my whole lifeblood is about the black struggles, the black experience. About bettering and improving who we are as a people. And I don't believe it should always be about protest, you know what I mean. It shouldn't be when someone is getting their head top lick off by police that you're out on the streets. There are other ways that we could be doing this even in times of peace, or not even peace cuz there's never peace, through film, media, etc., you know what I'm saying (Blagrove 2015).

One way Blagrove has attempted to address issues concerning black presence, black culture, and black lives in Britain and beyond is through the exhibition of interactive art pieces at NHC. What follows are insights into two of Blagrove's carnival pieces: "Spirit of Resistance" (2015) and "Culture Clash" (2016).

"Spirit of Resistance" is a compilation piece of African diasporic spirituality, explored through themes of ritual, remembrance, and resistance. There are two distinct components of the piece, a thematically-designed shopping cart and Blagrove (the "rider," as he calls himself). The

shopping cart is designed with various artifacts, images, and symbols of ritual, remembrance, and resistance from across the African diaspora. For example, on the front of the cart, one will find the unification of several Afro-Atlantic religious orders: *Regla de Ochà*, *Vodun*, *Candomblé*, *Abakua*, and *Ifá*. These religious orders are derived from the traditions of the Yoruba people of Nigeria and Benin, as well as Ewe people of Ghana and Togo, and are practiced in the Caribbean and in Brazil today among descendants of enslaved Africans. Underneath the Afro-Atlantic religious orders, there is also an image of an African man with a lip-plate, and a string of small hand bells and teeth dangling from the bottom of the cart (Figure 5.4).

On the back of the cart, one will find a decorated cowbell, a spoon, pocket watch, hand bell, the inscription of several Yoruba *orishas* (deities), a bind of sticks, and a doll with the picture of a woman safety-pinned to its chest. In my interview with Blagrove, he informed me that the woman in the picture was his grandmother and the purpose of the doll is to allow for the spirits of the ancestors to pass through them (Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.4 – Front of cart, 2015



Figure 5.5 – Back of cart, 2015

In addition to these, there is also a silver soprano saxophone turned upright with yellow flowers in its bell and the names of deceased pioneers of NHC on its keys that can be found on

the cart, as well as a Red Stripe Banner on the side of the cart with the names of important figures of NHC that are still alive. Around the frames of the cart are the words "freedom," "resistance," and "anti-establishment," and a gambling table was placed on top of the cart with a sign that reads "any double wins free shot" (Figures 5.6 and 5.7).



Figure 5.6 – Saxophone with tombstones of carnival pioneers, 2015



Figure 5.7 – Side of cart, 2015

Beyond the cart, the other crucial component of the "Spirit of Resistance" piece is Blagrove himself. While pushing the cart through the streets, Blagrove wears an African hunter's jacket with the names Dutty Boukman, Nat Turner, and Tate & Lyle sugar company inscribed on the back and the word "Free" on his cuffs (Figure 5.8). Boukman and Turner are both legendary figures of slave insurrections in the Americas. Boukman was a vodou priest and leader who took part in the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), while Turner led a slave revolt in Southampton County, Virginia in 1831. In the interior of his jacket, there are various stitchings of African symbols, as well as a British passport and the phrases "Listen to the universe," "Feel the energies around you," and "Surrender to nature" (Figure 5.9).



Figure 5.8 – Blagrove holding up the back of his jacket, 2015



Figure 5.9 – British Passport in the interior Blagrove's jacket, 2015

Regarding the ideology behind the "Spirit of Resistance" carnival piece, Blagrove stated the following to me in our 2015 interview:

> It's about a continual struggle. The battle being passed on [shows me a calendar with images of black freedom fighters entitled "Spirits of Resistance"] . . . It's about the characters of the struggle. It's not just about THEE black struggle. It's a universal struggle, you know what I'm saying? There is cross-over . . . I believe there is a connection within a certain movement or a message that can be learned from their own struggles [the different struggles of black freedom fighters] and incorporated into present-day black struggles . . . we connect the dot through this constant theme of resistance (Blagrove 2015).

In the interview, Blagrove also informed me that the piece is designed to be interactive and the entire endeavor—researching material, collecting artifacts, assembling the piece, and exhibiting it on the streets—is a personal, "spiritual journey" for him (Figures 5.10 and 5.11). It is interactive in the sense that carnival attendees, most of whom are white, directly engage with Blagrove and his presentation on the streets. They stop to talk with him, take pictures of and with him, and he gets them to participate in his game—roll a double, win a free shot. For the general carnival attendee looking to drink, dance, and have a good time at carnival, this game is typically very enticing to them. However, the game is a recoding of the centuries-long oppression and denigration of people of African descent at the hands of Europeans and the British, and Blagrove persuades white carnival revelers to consume the pain (figuratively speaking) completely

unbeknownst to them. This is achieved through the symbolism of the items on the cart, which includes rum and sugar, where Blagrove transfers the strife of African slaves and their descendants upon white carnival attendees by getting them to drink his rum for "free."

> This is a subtle piece of work. It might be in your face, it does seem blatant. But when I'm out in the carnival, and I'm serving white people, you know what I mean. I'm giving them refined sugar. And they're thinking, "oh this is great! Oh, this is wonderful!" And then people come up to me and say, "well, why you giving this to people for free?" Cuz I'm giving them [white people] rum for free. I don't charge them. 'I'm giving it [centuries of exploitation and oppression] back' . . . This is a spiritual journey, for me. It's a part of the energy, they won't even understand the context stuff like . . . [pointing], you know what I mean, Tate & Lyle, the sugar producer. They won't understand the significance of that. It's just a logo for them. But Tate & Lyle was one of the largest sugar producers. They didn't necessarily participate in the essence of slavery, but they came off the back of slavery . . . it still comes out of colonialism.

Continuing about the significance of symbolism in his piece:

> There is so much symbolism in here . . . me riding this coat with a British passport. If you're going to go traveling, you need a passport, yea? You can't get as far without a passport. For me, it's about symbolism and references. And of course you get people saying, "well, what does that mean?" or "what a pretty jacket!" "Ah, that's really nice!" "I really like it!" Then, there will be those people who will be appreciating it aesthetically and going, "Ah, that is really fantastic!" You get that all the time when you come out with a piece and everything else. And again, *they don't understand . . . our conceptions of art. They are not valued . . . So yea, this is a challenge to that. Appropriate this, motherfuckers*! (emphasis added, Blagrove 2015).



Figure 5.10 – Blagrove at NHC 2015, front view



Figure 5.11 – Blagrove at NHC 2015, back view

The latter portion of his statement speaks to how the carnival space has been co-opted over the years by mostly white middle class attendees, who in Blagrove's estimation, have no

idea what carnival is or why it even exists; it's treated as just a "jump up" in the streets. For Blagrove, the meaning and value of carnival becomes corrupted through the continued lack of cultural understanding regarding the purpose behind NHC and the lack of acknowledgement of its particular historical development in the context of rampant anti-black racism in Britain. Blagrove's art pieces, however, jolts those in the proximity of his presentations out of their comfort zones of simply partying in the streets, and forces the predominately white attendees to reckon with the historical continuum of black trauma: the legacies of slavery, colonialism, and empire, as well as the realities of contemporary black oppression in the UK.

> This is where we've come from. This is our struggle. And you got these people coming in and now a majority white audience attending carnival. Many of them don't even know why they're there; they're there for two days of "jump up." My piece is out to shock them. It is to bring them out of that comfort zone of just thinking it's about the celebration of music, dance, and jump up in the streets. When I'm in that crowd, and I'm surrounded . . . by a predominately sort of white middle class audience . . ., the piece make[s] them have to come face-to-face with this reality, someone is giving them something for free. We are celebrating together, but it reminds them of the struggle, you know what I mean. And brings them back face-to-face, if you like, with an authentic black experience . . . The gallery is the streets . . . [So], [t]hey are jumping up not just on the street, but they're jumping up in an interactive installation piece (Blagrove 2017).

Blagrove's follow-up piece in 2016 ("Culture Clash") was designed be a particularly "British statement" to mark the 50th anniversary of NHC. In order to make this statement, Blagrove assembled various symbols related specifically to the black experience and struggle in the UK in the postwar era. This included the logos of the National Rail Service, National Health Services, and London Transport (occupations filled by the *Windrush* generation, which were discussed in Chapter 1), as well as a hot comb and hair pick to symbolize the influence of black beauty, style, and fashion in postwar Britain. In many ways, these logos and items, which were located on the front on his cart, represented not only the transplantation of culture, but also the aspirations of black migrants seeking a better life in Britain.

The back of the cart reveals the ways in which the promises of the "Mother Country"

contradicted the lived realities of black migrants (Figure 5.12). For example, there is a huge sign across the back of the cart that reads, "No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish," reflecting the signposts that were used in widespread fashion in London as a means of housing discrimination against black residents. Surrounding the iconic signpost are other racist/xenophobic symbols and phrases that were also prevalent in postwar Britain: swastikas, Keep Britain White, KKK, jungle bunnies, Maggie's Britain, Go back to Africa, NF (National Front), and Whites Only, among several others. Superimposed over these denigrating words and symbols is the Latin phrase, *A luta continua* (the struggle continues). Struggle, and the way that is applied here, suggests that there has not been a clean breakage between the black liberation movements of the past and present. Rather, the struggles of the past have only mutated over time in conjunction with the present conditions of black people in the UK today, where they are still fighting to be fully accepted, recognized, and treated equally in British society.



Figure 5.12 – Blagrove at NHC 2016, back of cart



Figure 5.13 – Blagrove at NHC 2016, Side 1 of cart

Reflecting this dissonance and constant tension, one of the sides of the cart contained the phrases "2 Dyam Lie," Religion N State, and *a luta continua* plastered in various places (Figure

5.13). In an interview with Blagrove, he shared the following with me regarding the phrase "2 Dyam Lie":

> 2 Dyam Lie," that's just Jamaican . . . it was using the sort of language of the Caribbean, Jamaica in particular, Jamaican patois. As to how we were looking at the system. And so you "2 dyam lie" is a statement to the system about everything I was saying about the black experience. *I wanted to put that in a language of which certain white patrons who were attending carnival and looking at that wouldn't be able to read it. That was code for those who "knew"* . . . The black experience here, we had to re-calibrate all of this notion of "Mother Country." You know, coming to the Mother Country and the Mother Country is going to accept them [black migrants] here. They had been invited here to fill labor gaps and all of that stuff. *And it was all a lie*.
>
> When we arrived off the boat, there were arguments that they're taking our jobs. There's too much immigration in this country. You look back to all the Race Relations Acts and all of the things that were passed back in the '60s, it speaks to that . . . That was the narrative that we were greeted with when we stepped off the boats. So, that's what I was trying to bring about by the statements "2 Dyam Lie" and "Religion N State" (emphasis added, Blagrove 2017).

As can be seen from the insights provided by Blagrove, the realities of racial hostility, in many ways, negated the promises of a better life and future in Britain for many black migrant families, all while the continual perpetuation of the "Mother Country lie" planted the seeds for new forms of resistance against British hegemony.



Figure 5.14 – Blagrove at NHC 2016, Side 2 of cart

On the other side of the cart were the words "Culture Clash" in big, bold letters; it is also the title of Blagrove's piece (Figure 5.14). Underneath that were the dominant white and black

youth cultures of postwar Britain: the Teddy boys (English, white working class youth) and Rude boys (Jamaicans, black working class youth). Britain's "Rude Boys" were the children of the *Windrush* who were born in the UK and came of age in the 1970s and 1980s. And like the Teddy Boys, they, too, were part of Britain's "Rebel Generation." However, their rebellion was entrenched in a renewed sense of black pride to combat alienation, especially in relation to black history, culture, and musics, as well as an interest in black revolutionary politics. This was, in essence, the emergence of a new, postwar politics of value among British youth that was rooted in blackness.

Thus, on top of the cart, Blagrove had a chest propped open with writing on each of its faces that spoke to the ethos of the black British "Rebel Generation." On one of its faces is a modified quote by Stokely Carmichael, who was an active member of the Civil Rights, global Pan-African, and Black Power movements, and helped to inspire the formation of the British Panther Party after his visit to London in 1967. The quote reads, "Our grandfathers had to run, run, run. My generation's out of breath. We ain't running no more . . . (Stokely Carmichael)." Inscribed underneath that are the words "We're dancing." Additionally, the interior sides of box reads "Soul," "Power," "Resistance," and "Revolution," while the exterior has the words "Blues," "Jazz," "Soul, and "Reggae" inscribed in them. According to Blagrove, music was one of the crucial mediums through which the aspirations and desires of black British youth were articulated.

> Through music I recognize that that's the conduit, the mechanism that we used to communicate. These are our spokespeople, the musicians. They are almost our politicians, our griots, our storytellers. So using the symbolism of the titles of the music was to sort of bring out the essence of the contribution of the music to the struggle (Blagrove 2017).

Finally, just as with the "Spirit of Resistance" piece, "Culture Clash" also had a gambling table infused into the presentation and was intended to operate as an interactive piece as well.

Though the installation is interactive, Blagrove was sure to let me know that he does not put on the pieces in order to get approval or applause from an audience; instead, he constructs and exhibits them for himself in accordance with his own personal beliefs, experiences, and values.

> [The] piece is done for myself . . . I know the significance. I can interpret it. I am the scholar. I am the writer. I am the historian. I am the recorder of that piece. So whether people get the symbolism or not is neither here nor there. I understand what it's done. It's a message through and to the ancestors . . . The pieces embod[y] our history. It speaks of all of those experiences, from slavery to the present condition . . . It is saying we are still here. It is saying we're not giving up. It is saying that there's still fighting, there's still pushing, there's still the challenge of inequality and we're still fighting for equal rights, and to be represented and recognized as human beings, you know what I mean. And on planet Earth as equal owners, with an equal destiny and an equal vision. That needs to be seen. We need to be seen. We are not seen. And that I think, to me, is what it represents (Blagrove 2017).

Insights from Blagrove on the intention and aims of his pieces reveal the depths to which his artistic creativity and sensibilities are linked to his radical political imagination, where the value of the street festival, for him, stems from it being a space to directly challenge regimes of dominance and articulate his visions of a future Britain and world that is more accepting, tolerable, just, and equal for black people. This was done by transforming the streets into an interactive gallery, which allowed Blagrove to reconstruct power relations between himself and white carnival attendees in the carnival space (Figures 5.15 and 5.16). In the process of this reconstruction, Blagrove used forms of creative resistance to not only make visible the historical continuum of trauma that black people in the UK have had to endure due to the legacies of slavery, colonialism, and empire, which is often overshadowed in the festive merriment of "jumping up" during carnival, but also affirm black humanity and the potency of black cultural presence in postwar Britain.



Figure 5.15 – Blagrove at NHC 2016 pushing cart through crowd



Figure 5.16 – Blagrove giving a carnival attendee a "free" shot of rum

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, questions of value were situated relationally to theories of black radicalism to get beyond interrogations of the meaning and significance of particular art pieces and musical performances, to, instead, interrogate power and power relations between dominant and oppressed groups. In doing so, I wanted to think more critically about how the political imagination and specific actions/creative works of black carnivalists have served as a challenge to structures of power that exist in British society and empower marginalized groups. In order to shed light on this phenomenon, I surveyed the lives and activities of several UK-based black activists, organizers, musicians, and artists in the postwar period, beginning with Claudia Jones.

Jones's involvement in leftist radical politics in both the US and UK, as originally discussed in Chapter 1 and in the earlier portions of this chapter, absolutely influenced her position on carnival and Caribbean culture more generally. Perhaps the best book to date that documents this extensively is *Left of Karl Marx* (2007) by historian Carole Boyce Davies. In Davies' work, she notes that Jones drew on all of her experiences as an international activist and journalist in the process of organizing carnival in Britain, and intended to promote Caribbean culture in the UK to not only foster black solidarity, but also cultivate a multiracial coalition for human liberation. Thus, the movement for carnival in postwar Britain was, from the outset, a

politicized endeavor to combat violence and marginalization in Britain, as well as a means to unify black and other oppressed communities through the development and promotion of carnival and carnival arts in the UK.

Another important figure in the carnival arena that I noted who was transformed by black radicalism was Darcus Howe. As the nephew of C.L.R James, member of the British Black Panther Party, and carnival aficionado, Howe understood that black art had a role to play in the ongoing political struggle of black and ethnic minority communities in Britain and beyond. As a result, in addition to his involvement in various social movements and regular political commentary and writings on colonialism, imperialism, and racism in *Race Today*, Howe also translated his radical imagination into forms of masquerade to promote local and Third World liberation struggles.

Finally, I drew attention to the development of "radical mas" productions at NHC by the La Rose brothers. Like Howe, Michael and Keith were also born into a family of freedom fighters. Their father, John La Rose (1961-2006), was a political activist, poet, and publisher who founded New Beacon Books (the first Caribbean publishing house in Britain); he was also involved in the anticolonial struggle and Caribbean Arts Movement, and was chairman of the George Padmore Institute.[56] Additionally, between 1982 and 1995, John La Rose organized the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books. In my interview with his son Michael La Rose, he shared with me that his father believed that art and culture were essential in political struggles. Thus, he fully supported the radical mas productions of People's War Carnival Band—their masquerade camp was even located at the George Padmore Institute. With the unwavering support of their father, and influence from their father's circle of radical activists

[56] The George Padmore Institute is a London-based archive, library, and resource center dedicated to African, Caribbean, and Asian communities in Britain and Europe

and peers, the La Rose brothers produced several masquerade themes between 1982 and 1998 that spoke out against social, political, and economic injustices committed against black and other marginalized peoples.

In addition to these historical examples, I also showed how black radicalism continues to inform the politics of value in London's contemporary scene through examples of music, visual art, and interactive installation pieces. The first example concerned British calypso and the creation of political kaisos in the musical career of Alexander D Great. In particular, I highlighted his most critically acclaimed piece "Haiti," and discussed the piece in tandem with the place that Haiti continues to occupy in the black political imagination as a symbol of liberation and freedom. Moreover, through the timing of his performances of "Haiti" in times of crises, in 2010 after the Haiti earthquake and again in 2016 after Hurricane Matthew, I illuminated the ways in which Alex's political kaiso was not only a critique of the ongoing exploitation of Haiti and its people, but also a song of solidarity with Haitians in the midst of their recovery efforts.

In relation to calypso, soca is often written off as simply music for partying and socializing, not serious socio-political commentary. Despite the prevalence of this discourse on soca music, the example of the 2017 carnival anthem "Full Extreme" and Stacey Ross's activist-centered artwork "We Jammin Still" demonstrates the potential of soca for inspiring political thinking and engagement, particularly a radical feminism. Much has been written about the role that both soca and carnival play in reinforcing gender-based stereotypes and asymmetrical power relations between men and women in Caribbean societies (Bettleheim 1998: Frietas 1999; Edmondson 2003; Frank 2007). Instead of shying away from these issues and the continued perpetuation of domestic violence and rape culture, Ross tackles them head-on in "We Jammin

Still" by deploying the black female body in her visual artwork as a political tool of resistance through forms of celebration and self-representation, as well as the site of knowledge, pleasure, and power. In doing so, what is revealed through her work are insights into a particularly (black) feminist politics of value that is grounded in projects of social justice and empowerment.

The final example I included in this chapter consisted of radical interactive art installations by Ishmahil Blagrove at NHC 2015 and 2016. Like Alex's "Haiti" and Stacey's "We Jammin Still," Blagrove's pieces drew inspiration from both historical and present-day black struggles. In "Spirit of Resistance" (2015), Blagrove traces the legacy of black revolutionary politics from the pre-emancipation period to the present-day through Afro-Atlantic religiosity, using the themes of ritual and remembrance, and linking them to forms of creative resistance in the carnival arena. His follow-up piece, "Culture Clash" (2016), continued that trajectory through a centering of the black British experience in the postwar period, illuminating the ways in which the legacies of slavery, colonialism, and empire were fundamental in the shaping of social relations and power hierarchies in postwar Britain. In this context, Blagrove's piece provided insights into how black art and music were key catalyst in spearheading a resistance movement in postwar Britain to combat racism, discrimination, and xenophobia for a new generation of British-born black youth. Moreover, through each of these examples, we can see how the political imagination of black carnivalists continues to be connected to the black liberation struggle and their desires to bring new social worlds into being, as they attempt to convert the legacies of trauma, marginality, and exploitation into forms of solidarity and empowerment through carnival art.

CONCLUSIONS

RETHINKING QUESTIONS OF VALUE: ON MARGINALITY AND BLACK EMPOWERMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN DIASPORA

> Because of the racism, of who runs the carnival, who creates it, who makes it, they don't want to acknowledge what it has contributed to Britain and British society. It has brought people together . . .There are two things that have melded and molded the black identity in Britain. One was reggae music. The other was the Notting Hill Carnival. These are the two things that have brought us together. When people came from Jamaica, Trinidad, St. Lucia, Dominica, Nigeria, Ghana, all over the diaspora, it was here in the United Kingdom that we met for the first time. This is where we molded our identity, where we might eat rice and peas, and roti, and souse in the same meal. This is what it means to be black and British. This is the black British experience . . .
>
> We need to let the State know, loud and clear, that we are here, that we are black, that we are Caribbean, that we are African, that we are British, that we are here to stay. And if they don't like our presence here, they can leave. They went to Africa. They spent 400 years in Africa. I am 46 years old. I have 360 years left in this country, me and my children, before they can even tell me about going back. So power to our people (Blagrove 2014).

In February 2018, a link crossed my Twitter social media feed concerning organizational changes that were being made within NHC for the future. The information in the link stated that, in 2017, the RBKC council invited an external company to come in and run carnival operations unbeknownst to the carnival organizing committee. The company is said to have had no prior experience whatsoever with carnival, its performances arenas, the complexities of route management, or a proper understanding of the historical and cultural relevancy of carnival to black/Caribbean Britons. According to the link, the RBKC council had also begun soliciting the interest of several third party events team to operate NHC 2018. As a response to these decisions by one of carnival's primary stakeholders, a petition was created by carnival leaders to garner widespread support for keeping carnival under the control of dedicated carnivalists, who, for over 50 years now, have delivered NHC as mostly unpaid volunteers. In addition to seeking support, the petition also signifies the continued fight of black carnivalists to maintain the legacy,

heritage, integrity, and cultural ownership of NHC, and reveals the ongoing struggle in Britain over the meaning and valuation of NHC and its associated carnival art forms.

Using questions of value as an overarching theme in this dissertation, my intent was to excavate the different ways that carnival art, music, and festival performances in London have come to acquire significance and value among black carnivalists of Caribbean heritage in particularly meaningful ways. While the only other study on value and NHC focuses primarily on its economic significance, this dissertation illustrates the various ways that non-economic forms of value are also produced through carnival. This was done by drawing on anthropological theories of value, as well as diaspora and spatial theory, and integrating them with my ethnography of carnival-related activities in London's scene.

However, considering the particular social conditions and circumstances of black, ethnic minority populations in postwar Britain, some adjustments to current anthropological theories of value were also necessary, especially as it related to accounting for the impact of racism and other oppressive forms of marginalization in the lives of black/Caribbean Britons. Thus, I began this study by first investigating the *historical context* for the development of a postwar carnival movement in Britain within the changing social and political landscape of the UK in the postwar era. As I show in Chapter 1, the carnival movement, scene, and street festival are inextricably linked to the aftermath of large-scale Caribbean migration and resettlement in the UK, and strategies of collective action that were developed among ethnic migrant groups between the 1950s and '70s to combat the onslaught of anti-black racism, xenophobia, and violence against their communities. It is from this historical context of the struggle against marginalization and anti-black racism in Britain, first and foremost, that carnival has come to acquire particular kinds of meaning and significance to black British carnivalists. By interrogating the development of

Britain's carnival movement within this historical context, Chapter 1 provides empirical evidence that *experiences of marginality* can also directly impact how value and meaning are assigned to certain things, spaces and places, and particular kinds of actions.

As the carnival arts scene has grown and expanded over the years, resulting in the production of the biggest cultural celebration in the UK and the largest street festival in Europe, London's premier carnival has accumulated other forms of value as well in its process of becoming a multi-million pound enterprise. Building on the historical context for the development of the postwar carnival movement, I also investigated the *cultural context* of London's carnival arts scene today as a production, performance, and practice, explored through an ethnography of the NHC street festival (Chapters 2 and 3) and the London Calypso Tent (Chapter 4). During these investigations, it was my aim to show how people not only assign value to things, but also to *spaces* and *actions* in the carnival domain, as they, too, can convey meaning. For example, part of the meaning and value that is attributed to the NHC festival space comes from the fact that it actually continues to take place on the streets of Notting Hill, making it not only tied to the present-day local community, but also linked to the struggles of Caribbean community members that lived in the Notting Hill area during the early postwar years and who were also instrumental in the development of NHC. This serves as an illustration that spaces have histories, and those histories are also meaningful to people in distinct ways. As a result, one of the critical reasons why carnival continues to be regarded as "valuable" to Britain's Caribbean community is because their history in postwar UK, in all of its particularities, is evoked every time the NHC street festival is produced.

Actions, like things and spaces, also convey meaning(s) and can produce value. This was demonstrated in Chapters 2 and 3, which focused largely on the cultural production of the NHC

street festival, in space and time. In Chapter 2, for example, I show how the production of the street festival mediates a range of social interactions and relations within a unique spatial configuration, while also being a major public platform for contemporary exhibitions of black/Caribbean culture in the UK. Chapter 3 illustrates how the dynamism of the street festival, along with the various actors who share, facilitate, or help to produce the space, results in the NHC being suspended in web of signification that varies from context to context, depending on the orientation of the group in question. To draw this out more, I interrogated the different investments people have in NHC, whether as participants, organizers, sponsors, or culture producers, which also sheds light on existing NHC value regimes and power struggles between these groups over the value and meaning of carnival.

Chapter 4 continued the interrogation of cultural activities in London's broader carnival scene by focusing on British calypso, namely the production of the present-day London Calypso Tent competition. While the chapter began by exploring the prominence of early calypso recordings that were produced in Britain during the 1950s and '60s, the chapter argued that the significance of calypso in Britain today has to be understood within the context of competition, as a calypsonian's live performance during the London Calypso Tent is the principal medium through which value is assigned to calypso artists and their music during the NHC festival season. In addition to discussing the established music standards for calypso, I also suggested that the competition showcase (i.e., the individual presentations by each competing calypsonian in the Tent) could also be interpreted as the performance of values, which are subsequently interpreted, judged, and measured by audiences and competition officiants based on the degree to which the presented values, sentiments, and viewpoints are shared or contested.

In the fifth and final chapter, I attempted to illustrate how questions of value could also

be used as an analytical tool to not only interrogate meaning and forms of signification, but also relations of power between dominant and non-dominant groups. However, this required adjusting the lens of the analysis so that it accounted for the specificity of power relations in the lives of real people, in real times, places, and contexts. In my study on black carnivalists of Caribbean heritage, this meant accounting for intersecting race, gender, and class dynamics, which is not taking up in the general anthropological discourse on value. To fill this void, I turned my attention to the theoretical writings on the Black Radical Tradition, which provide a more intersectional approach for interrogating the political implications and dynamics of value. While Chapter 1 established that structural inequality and asymmetrical power relations affect how marginalized peoples assign value and meaning to things/spaces/actions, Chapter 5 aimed to illuminate its flip-side; when marginalized social actors engage in activities or invest in projects that are meaningful to them, while being constantly subjected to forms of domination and oppression, those activities and investments could also become a critical source of individual and collective empowerment to inspire social change. This was illustrated through surveys of the lives and activities of several UK-based black activists, organizers, musicians, and artists in London's carnival arts scene, past and present.

In using questions of value to write this dissertation, what has become abundantly clear is that the value of carnival among black carnivalists in London has never simply been about how much money is generated during the production of the NHC street festival—though its economic significance has recently been one of many political tools used for the justification of why the carnival should continue to exist. Instead, as I've attempted to show over the course of this dissertation, for black carnivalists, the value, meaning, and significance of carnival is informed by their commitment to celebrate community, diversity, and togetherness in the face adversity,

their proclaimed right to space as British citizens and Notting Hill community members, their fight for equal opportunities and representation in Britain, their desires for black people to be recognized more fully for their contributions to British society, and above all, their hopes and dreams of a future Britain and world that is more free and just for marginalized and oppressed peoples.

Through my case study of London's carnival arts scene, this dissertation makes several key contributions to the field of ethnomusicology and black diaspora studies. While there is a long and rich history of black musicking in the British Isles, ethnomusicologists have largely ignored the musical cultures of black Britons, though Britain has historically been (and continues to be) an important hub for black musicians and artists from different parts of the world. This dissertation fills that lacuna through historical and ethnographic investigations of carnival art and music practices among black Britons of Caribbean heritage in the postwar era.

Additionally, as noted in recent writings by Timothy D. Taylor, there is a re-occurring tendency in music scholarship to produce functionalist interpretations about the role/nature of music in a given society or community (see Taylor 2015, 2017). While not refuting the possibility that music can, in certain times and situations, express or reinforce cultural identities, create a sense of togetherness, promote social change, etc., this dissertation sought to actively work against reproducing such functionalist interpretations by incorporating an actor- and action-centered model for analyzing music and other cultural phenomenon. Inspired by interventions in the anthropological literature on value, my research inquiries and ethnographic analyses focus primarily on uncovering what is meaningful to the social actors in my study, as well as how meaning is produced and conveyed through their involvement in, or relationship to, particular activities in the carnival realm.

When questions of value are combined with spatial theory, I believe they can also offer new research directions in black diaspora studies as well. Scholars in the field of human geography have written extensively on the need for more critical interrogations of space and place, especially considering the analytic perspective that can be gained pertaining to social relations, cultural production, and power dynamics. While scholars of the black diaspora have undoubtedly been interested in these issues, more work can be done on unveiling the specificities of how various diasporic processes (e.g., movement, interactions, and exchanges) operate in real times, places, spaces, and contexts. In other words, by incorporating both spatial theory and anthropological theories of value into studies of the black diaspora, I argue that scholars can better ascertain the dynamics of how these diasporic communities have been formed and sustained over time, what exactly do people do to create and maintain social, cultural, and political ties between geographically distanced communities in the diaspora, and how value and meaning are produced through those ongoing actions and sustained connections. This dissertation on carnival and the postwar Caribbean diaspora in Britain is a step in that direction.

APPENDIX

"History of Carnival" by Alexander D Great
(Santimanitay-style chord progression)

Verse:

E minor / E minor / A minor / E minor / E minor / E minor /A minor / E minor

E major / A minor / D Major / G major / C major / A minor / B major 7 / E minor

Chorus:

E major / A minor / D Major / G major / C major / A minor / B major 7 / E minor

Note: Alex's chord sequence (above) is slightly different from the most common sequence, which is shown below.

Other common chord progressions used in extempo, santimanitay-style

E minor / E minor / B major 7 / E minor / E minor / E minor / B major 7 / E minor

E major / A minor / D major / G Major / E minor / A minor / B major 7 / E minor

CALYPSO LYRICS

"How To Capture D Monarchy"
by Sheldon Skeete (2015)

Instrumental Introduction . . .
Tabernacle, good evening
I have a message for you all
And for all kaisonians from the elders
So I am the messenger

Verse 1:
History has it that I have won this thing 3 years in a row
Contributing to the art form of kaiso
Writing my own lyrics, with catchy melody
Rendering for the entire world to see
So in 2015, it is my duty
As reigning Kaiso King of this country
To give them the . . . [inaudible] recipe
On what they must do to capture d monarchy

Chorus 1:
Sing about this *[Divettes: Sing],* Sing about that *[Divettes: Sing]*
Sing about them *[Divettes: Ooooo]* slaves over in Iraq
Sing about how Isis treating woman
About them molesting poor little children
Sing bout world peace *[Divettes: Sing]*, poverty in Greece *[Divettes: Sing]*
And the whole truth the world media *[Divettes: Ooooo]* will not release
Follow the essentials of my recipe
And then you're going to capture d monarchy

Bridge 1:
Chalkdust he call me on the phone
While I sat down on my throne
He said Spoiler, Antilla, and Melody
Said that is how you should capture d monarchy

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 2:
Well one thing for sure I know all you will agree
Some kaisonians deserve royal pedigree
I'm talking about the great, great pioneers
And some of the mighty legends of yesteryear
Remember Cipher, Growling Tiger,

Mighty Destroyer, Lord Pretender
Cro Cro told me I must continue the legacy
And show them how they should capture d monarchy

Chorus 2:
Sing about that *[Divettes: Sing]*, Sing about this *[Divettes: Sing]*
Sing about police brutality *[Divettes: Ooooo]* that exists
And when you check out the scene in America
At least 1 black youth police murder
Sing bout politics *[Divettes: Sing]*, and politicians *[Divettes: Sing]*
And all their great promises *[Divettes: Ooooo]* for elections
Sing how they brainwash us with black history
And then you're going to capture d monarchy

Bridge 2:
Shadow he call me on the phone
While I sat down on my throne
He said tell them put good lyrics to this melody
And then they surely should capture d monarchy

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 3:
Some people say calypsonians can cause trouble
Spoiler said that we are the voice of the people
So Mister Kaisonian, it's up to you and me
To sing about issues abroad and locally
Look at the TV, listen news daily
Open your two eyes and then tell me what you see
The evidence is black and white in 3D
And to this day you can capture d monarchy

Chorus 3:
Sing about that *[Divettes: Sing]*, Sing about this *[Divettes: Sing]*
Sing about the 12 who got gunned *[Divettes: Ooooo]* down in Paris
And as the world tries to deal with terrorism
Britain breeding boys like Jihadi John
Sing about – inaudible – *[Divettes: Sing]*, half the nation sick *[Divettes: Sing]*,
And the patients filling them *[Divettes: Ooooo]* – inaudible –
Of how mothers disposing of their own pickney
And then you're going to capture d monarchy

Bridge 3:
Stalin he call me on the phone
While I sat down on my throne
He told me that is the formula and the strategy

If you truly want to capture d monarchy

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 4:
My fellow kaisonians, I want to understand
All of the ladies and even the gentlemen
When I decide to sit down and write my songs
The very last thing on my mind is the Throne
It's perspiration, inspiration
The Almighty give me to have the motivation
Sometimes I smile and look at them with pity
To see them fighting to capture d monarchy

Chorus 4:
Sing about this *[Divettes: Sing]*, Sing about that *[Divettes: Sing]*
Sing about some of the war *[Divettes: Ooooo]* conflicts and riots
And in Syria as they try to end the shooting
The Ukraine have beef with Mr. Putin
Sing bout China *[Divettes: Sing]*, North Korea *[Divettes: Sing]*
And why America refrain *[Divettes: Ooooo]* from these areas
Sing why they never land a hand on Mugabe
And then you're going to capture d monarchy

Bridge 4:
Sparrow he text me on the phone
While I sat down on my throne
He said announce the results and bring the trophy
Cuz tonight I will retain d monarchy!

Instrumental closing . . .

"Referendum"
by G-String (2016)

Introduction:
G-String again . . .
I am here representing the "Calypso Party"
Because in my opinion we need a Calypso Referendum
Alright!

Verse 1:
On my way driving through Piccadilly
Heading to a function
Listening to Theresa May
On the radio with the Referendum
So I call the station up
And say Theresa listen to me
The referendum that I'm voting for
Is to give black people their money, and I tell she . . .

Chorus 1:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
That is what we're voting for
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
It's time I address the floor
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
I telling them so
The referendum that I voting for
It is the one that's for Calypso!

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 2:
Well in my opinion
We need a Calypso Referendum
So I take the liberty
And then I send an email to Cameron
But when I put my point across
He only telling me bout the Euro
I said the only referendum I voting
Is the one that's for Calypso, I tell you . . .

Chorus 2:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
That is what we're voting for
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
It's time to address the floor

[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Tell Theresa so
The only referendum that we voting for
It is the one that's for Calypso!

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 3:
Well in my opinion
We need a calypsonian MP
To run up the country
Giving them social commentary
Giving them the truths and the rights,
Letting all of the whole world know
The contribution that we play
Through the music of calypso, I tell you . . .

Chorus 3:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Yes, that is the one for me
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
So tell all the whole country (whoa-o oo!)
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Tell Theresa so
The referendum that we voting for
Is the one that's for Calypso!

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 4:
When I turn an MP
I'm tackling the BBC
Every year they send a letter
Cuz they want a license fee
But every time that I pay the license
And then I watch the TV
The programs that they put on it
I say that they don't representing me, so I tell them . . .

Chorus 4:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
I'm telling the BBC
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Don't put it on that [inaudible]
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Tell the BBC so
The only time that we pay we license

Is when they start to show Calypso!

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 5:
When you say Referendum
How come they don't mention King Leopold?
Who went to the Congo
Kill all the people and steal all we gold
The next criminal I'm talking about
It is the one that they call Cecil Rhodes
So when I reach in the power
We giving Africa back all they gold, I tell you . . .

Chorus 5:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Yes, that is the one for me
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Reparations for all of the slavery
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
I tell the Queen so
The only Referendum that we voting for
Is the one that's for Calypso!

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 6:
When I turn an MP
Boris Johnson he get affright
And he run round the corner fast
And then he jump on he Boris Bike
Nigel Farage resigned his post
And then the Queen sent me an invite
She said she want G-String come round
And sing a sweet melody tonight, and I tell you . . .

Chorus 6:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Well, that is the one for me
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Please, please put back on your nightee
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
I tell the Queen so
The referendum we voting for
It is the one that's for Calypso!

Verse 7:
When I get in power
They said the Queen yea she vex as hell
I'm closing down Buckingham Palace
And building a homeless hostel
That is in my manifesto
On page 22
And don't worry bout the Queen at all
I'm giving her a room with a view, I tell you . . .

Chorus 7:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
- inaudible -
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
- inaudible -
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Tell the minister so
The only you can free the people
Is when you start to sing Calypso!

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 8:
When I get in power
I'm closing down the London Dungeon
Then I'm running round the corner
And then I'm shutting down the Tower of London
And then I'm building a Black museum
For the whole world to see
The contributions that Black people made
To build this motherf***ing country, I tell you . . .

Chorus 8:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
That is what we're voting for
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
I tell you brother, I addressing the floor
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Tell Theresa so
The referendum that we voting for
It is the one that's for Calypso!

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 9:
When I get in power
I tackling the ABC

In the future the thing I'm looking for
They call it "transparency"
I don't want nobody to say
That the ABC is corrupt
But even when Sheldon Skeete don't come
They just still give Sheldon the Cup

Chorus 9:
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
I'm tackling the ABC
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Yes, that is the one for me
[Divettes: Calypso Referendum!]
Tell the ABC so
If we want to keep it for long
We have to start to protect Calypso!

"Equal Opportunity"
by Brown Sugar (2017)

Instrumental Introduction . . .

Verse 1:
Woman, I sympathize with your plight so I'll try, oh my . . .
To take it easy on you
Woman, please understand that your own condition is
Because of the things that you choose to do
Wanting to compete with man
Came up with your brilliant plan
Dress up and you're gone, now you're wondering what is wrong
Suddenly now you find you're tired all of the time, you I want to remind
Remind!

Chorus 1:
[Divettes: It's not equal] – It's not equal
Each day going to work, still it's getting harder to cope
[Divettes: It's not equal]– No! It's not equal
All day on your feet, now they waiting on you to eat
[Divettes: It's not equal] – No, no, no! It's not equal
You work hard all day, they don't want to hear what you say
[Divettes: It's not equal] – No, it's not equal. It's not equal
You reach home half-dead, still he posing for you in bed

Bridge 1:
[Divettes: Equal opportunity] – [inaudible]
[Divettes: Equal opportunity] – Not for me
Just leave me alone, I'm waiting for them to come home
[Divettes: That's equality for me] – Oh yea, yea, yea
[Divettes: Equal opportunity] – Oh!

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 2:
Woman, impossible as it may seem to be
My dream is to be a stay-home Queen.
Woman, appreciate yourself more. Don't ignore,
But explore your worth as a human being.
From the dawn of creation
Ruler-ship was in your hand
Now you think you in a contest to see between you and man who's best
Always on the whole to keep up a show. You cannot find happiness.
I tell you more rest. Oh!

Chorus 2:
[Divettes: It's not equal] – No, it's not equal. It's not equal.
Each day going to work, still it's getting harder to cope
[Divettes: It's not equal] – No, it's not equal. It's not equal.
Working under stress, you come home and things in a mess
[Divettes: It's not equal] – No, it's not equal. It's not equal.
All day on the job, you come home, he gone to the pub
[Divettes: It's not equal] – No, it's not equal. It's not equal.
Children calling you, cuz they need attention too

Bridge 2:
[Divettes: Equal opportunity] – Not for me, no!
[Divettes: Equal opportunity] – [inaudible]
Just leave me alone. I'm waiting for them to come home
[Divettes: That's equality for me] – Oh yea, yea, yea.
[Divettes: Equal opportunity]

Instrumental interlude . . .

Verse 3:
Woman, for years of dedication to humans
I salute your faithful contribution.
Woman, in times we have to unite. Kept it tight,
Have to fight for justification
Fighting for our rights to work. Being treated just like dirt
For all that you have helped us through . . . [inaudible]
Oh no, it won't go away, so listen today we fighting for equal pay.
I tell you no way! I say! I say!

Chorus 3:
[Divettes: It's not equal] – It's not equal, no!
The same job we do, but he getting paid more than you
[Divettes: It's not equal] – No, it's not equal. It's not equal.
You're more qualified to be boss, but they push it to him first
[Divettes: It's not equal] – No, it's not equal. It's not equal, no!
Hoping for a break, wake up woman for goodness sake
[Divettes: It's not equal] – No, it's not equal. It's not equal, no!
You trying your best, but all they see is your dress

Bridge 3:
[Divettes: Equal opportunity] – [inaudible]
[Divettes: Equal opportunity] – Not for me, no!
Just leave me alone. I'm waiting for them to come home
[Divettes: That's equality for me] – Oh yea, yea, yea.
[Divettes: Equal opportunity] – Oh yea!

Instrumental closing . . .

"Haiti"
by Alexander D Great (2010)

Verse 1:
The Western world's poorest country, the one called Haiti
Really been suffering since she declared herself free
We hear bout the massive earthquake, made the ground shake
Thereby increasing the grief that was there already
Now, rich countries all try their best
How, to see who's better than the rest
Row, about the deaths which Haiti's incurred
The reasons are so absurd

Chorus:
Haiti, this world has refused you
Haiti, confused and abused you
Haiti, can there be no end to your pain?
How much more can remain?
Haiti, this world has to face you
Haiti, have some grace and embrace you
Haiti, we can't turn our backs on you again

Verse 2:
Haitians fought a 10-year war til 1804
Winning their freedom and showing Napoleon the door
La Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité just empty slogans
Breaking like waves on the shore
Why France wanted reparations?
By charging their once enslaved nation
Cry! To pay 150 million
And today that's 20 billion

Chorus:
Haiti, this world has refused you
Haiti, confused and abused you
Haiti, can there be no end to your pain?
How much more can remain?
Haiti, this world has to face you
Haiti, have some grace and embrace you
Haiti, we can't turn our backs on you again

Verse 3:
The start of the 20th century USA agree
To help France her dues, the profits lost to slavery
They used the pretext to invade, Haitians were betrayed

For refusing to lose, what they'd won by their bravery
Through merciless exploitation
Grew aggressive legislation
To make it hard for her to survive
But Haiti's very alive

Chorus:
Haiti, this world has refused you
Haiti, confused and abused you
Haiti, can there be no end to your pain?
How much more can remain?
Haiti, this world has to face you
Haiti, have some grace and embrace you
Haiti, we can't turn our backs on you again

Verse 4:
200 years of vicious lies and while surmise
Then came the last lie, that this was a place to despise
With right-wing puppet Heads of State, left to her fate
Haiti was passed by, hoping her sun could not rise
Pray that justice somehow will prevail
May they guarantee that she won't fail
Say the words and let the actions follow
So those words will not sound hollow

Chorus:
Haiti, this world has refused you
Haiti, confused and abused you
Haiti, can there be no end to your pain?
How much more can remain?
Haiti, this world has to face you
Haiti, have some grace and embrace you
Haiti, we can't turn our backs on you again

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